Says Kabir...

A COLLECTION OF
ONE HUNDRED
AND TEN POEMS
OF KABIR

Translated by
SUSHILA MAHAJAN

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Sri Sri Mata Amritanandmayi

"The Light House of Love and Compassion"

Infinite is Guru's glory,
His grace is Infinite,
He opens the inner-eye
and reveals the Infinite.

— Kabir

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SUSHILA MAHAJAN

Foreword

"I look around for lover,
but find lover nowhere,
when two lovers meet,
all that's bitter, turns sweet."

So said Kabir in the *sakhi* entitled 'Of Guru-Disciple'. Kabir had found his 'lover' (Guru), and had discovered the source of nectar. Since then the seekers of nectar begin their search with a dip in the nectar-fount of Kabir.

Kabir is equally dear to classes and masses. If the scholars in the universities and colleges enjoy unravelling the layers of intellectual, social, and mystical implications of his poems, the courtyard-singers of *Kabira* revel in the spiritual bliss, his songs are suffused with.

Of course, in his own age, Kabir was an eye-witness to what he said, but he is so close to the grassroots that even today

people look up to him as 'an eyewitness'. He is one of the most quoted poets.

Wherever Kabir might be, by the riverside or on the way, in the woods or in the market place, he was in constant communion with the 'society of saints'. The '*sadho*' of Kabir was not a *sadhu* in ochre; he was a common man, a common aspirant.

The common man is central to the poetry of Kabir. Standing in the market place itself, he sought the welfare of these common people exploited by the selfish mercantile interests. And rising above the friend-foe duality, he launched a campaign for protecting the society from market-mentality.

Even today, fearless voice of Kabir seems to be shaking or shocking people. With fear of none and love for all, he is as much a part of the tribal communities of Chhatisgarh as he is of any state in the Northern India.

It is a pleasant surprise that a temple is dedicated to Kabir in Karnataka. It shows how Kabir is popular even in the non-Hindi speaking provinces, though people there are deprived of a contact with

him through his poems. So Dr. Sushila Mahajan decided to let the English language readers savour of the songs of Kabir.

Dr. Mahajan, a Reader in the Department of English, is rooted in Indian culture. She appreciates the beauty of Hindi literature as she does that of English. Equally fond of both the languages as she is, her love for English language inspired her to transplant in it the psyche of Indian life and literature.

Her special concern with the questions of life along with those of literature drove her to Kabir. To know and comprehend Kabir, she became a seeker of Kabir. She went through Kabir's works, studied the commentaries on them along with the translations of his poems. After poring over them for long, she started the translation work.

To translate anything from Hindi into English is quite tedious and to translate Kabir in English is a really tough job. Even in prose it requires very close attention but in poetic form it is a venture. It demands skill and ability to move about freely within the given limits. The translator has chosen the difficult path.

The selection of the poems also reflects her bent of mind. Kabir's poetry is replete with the tenets of Indian philosophy. Taking care of the English readers, Dr. Mahajan has divided the selected poems in three sections: (1) awakening, (2) yearning, and (3) union. Thus she has made it easier to get to the underlying idea of the poems. Many famous scholars have translated these beautiful and thoughtful poems of Kabir. Their translations are intellectual and academic. Mrs. Mahajan's translation comes from the heart; hence Kabir in English is natural and real.

While reading this translation of awakening, it seems one is reading Kabir in the original. On one hand, the translation acquaints the reader with Kabir's journey inwards in search of the bliss lying hidden in all of us, and on the other with so many nuances of the then society. The beguiled flower girl, stupid neighbour, corrupt officers, cruel landlord, mud-huts, drudgery without wages, pleading debtor, and relentless moneylender, all these pictures are carved on the mind. The wife away from her husband addressing him as 'my sister-in-laws' brother' gives a glimpse of the family ties and life on one level and of a soul

yearning for the Supreme-soul on the other level. 'Rare are wives who love their husbands' seems to say volumes about Kabir's views of marriage. This fusion of sociology, philosophy, *bhakti, sadhana* and personal agony too in the poems of Kabir is just wonderful.

There is no need to discuss here the nuances of the art of translation. As one reads, one knows how Kabir is as fresh and original in English as he is in Hindi. This could be possible because for the last two years Dr. Sushila Mahajan has been immersed in Kabir. I am sure that this translation of Kabir will pervade the mind of the readers and every heart will long for Kabir.

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About Kabir

'A chosen seed of God, he was sown in the soil at a chosen time.'

THE SEED

"Kabir, the weaver,
becomes a connoisseur,
and leaps the gulf to freedom."

(u-39)

He threw off the shackles and grew up naturally. A believer in action, he did what he said, and said what he saw. His life was a touchstone for the truths he states in his songs. His songs articulate his quest for Brahma or his inner-self.

A singer of the soul, he was close to the soil he belonged to. Believed to have been born in 1398, initiated by Ramanand, married to Loi, he lived at Kashi, but before his death in 1518, he left for Magahar to dismiss the popular

belief that death at Kashi ensures redemption while at Magahar re-birth as a donkey. Naïve are people who accept such myths; he exhorted them:

"Listen O saints,
says Kabir,
let none have qualms;

barren Magahar
is as Kashi, if
heart is full of Ram."

(a-30)

Nullifying such blind faith in the holy places, he pointed the way to the sanctuary within. His emphasis on the holiness of heart, with love for Ram as a purifier, was a new concept in his age.

He eludes the scholars' attempt to categorize him. A mystery surrounds his parentage. Some scholars believe that he was born of a Brahmin widow who discarded him, fearing social disgrace. He is supposed to have been spotted and picked up by a childless, Muslim weaver couple, Niru and Nima. The others consider the latter to be his biological parents. However, he proclaimed Hari as his parents:

"Mother Hari, I am your son,
why don't you
acquit me of my sins?"

(y-2)

"My Father dear,
guide me home,
and free me from the serfdom."

(y-20)

His parentage may be uncertain, but Kabir was certainly brought up in a weaver family. His poems are full of images from this profession. Though he lived by weaving and spinning, his heart lay at the lotus feet of his sweet heart Ram:

"I'm smitten by love,
now who will weave, O mother?
I am drunk on Rama-wine,
now who will weave, O mother?"

(y-3)

Despite this difficulty, he continued weaving to look after his family, taking that as his Master's wish. Such a total surrender turned all his actions into service of the Lord. He was a householder yet a saint. He believed in trouncing rather than renouncing the world because:

"Truth lies at home,
home is Truth,
and it is found via home."

(u-29)

He alone can find it who burns down his house of greed, desires, and attachment. Kabir burnt down his. Such an act demands courage which he had aplenty. His insistence on speaking truth, without caring for its consequence, invited troubles for him. For the so-called high class, he was too big for his boots. He was humiliated. It is said that miscreants set his thatched hut on fire. The then king, Sikandar Lodi tortured him for his so-called infidelity that Ram and Rahim are one and the same. Bound to boulders, he was sunk in the Ganges, but he is believed to have floated to the surface, sitting on a mat. He was even thrown before a wild elephant who just bowed to him and left. There is reference to it in his poems.

Was he Hindu or Muslim? He was neither of the two. He was only a good human being. A beautiful legend attached to his death illustrates it. It is said that after his death his Hindu and Muslim disciples fought over his body, Hindus wanting to burn it, and Muslims to bury. The legend says that the dead body turned

into flowers, which his disciples divided between themselves.

According to Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, the story suggests Kabir's lineage from Nath-sect *yogis* who turned householder, and later converted to Islam. They had the tradition of first cremating the body then burying the ashes. Perhaps the so-called flowers were ashes. His aggressive style also seems to have been a legacy of his Nath-sect ancestors. Supporting his theory, Dr. Dwivedi says that Kabir calls himself *Kori* or *Julaha*, but never a Muslim. When he refers to himself as neither Hindu nor Muslim, a high-position on the spiritual-plane, he is also pointing to the social aspect of the fact.[1]

In a way it was God's grace on him that he was not too deeply coloured by any one faith to be immune to others. Had he been born in a conventional Brahmin or Muslim family or in some other age, perhaps he would not have been what he turned out to be—a rainbow that makes all hearts leap with joy.

THE SOIL

Kabir, a chosen seed was sown in the soil at a chosen time. Free from the

constraints of caste and creed, he was also spared of the conditioning of mind by a Pundit or a Maulavi. Life itself was his teacher. Freedom and honesty were his guides. His claim that he "never touched ink or paper, never held a pen in hand," is often taken as a mark of his illiteracy. Actually it is an ironical fling at the scholars who read scriptures or write pedantic statements on God and religion but know nothing about God or religion. Their knowledge, like sandal-load on a donkey's back, is of no use for them. According to Kabir, knowledge is an awareness of the self. It lies within, and has to be experienced. The seers of the yore experienced the scriptures. The scriptures point to the path, but are not the path. Kabir may or may not have studied the scriptures, but he had definitely felt them on his pulse. His approach to life was scientific. He accepted nothing without observation and experimentation. He scorned blind faith. Diving deep into the mud of life, he had found the lotus of awareness. His songs are suffused with its fragrance. There lies the secret of his universal appeal:

"All that is not felt on the pulse,
says Kabir,
is simply hollow and false."

(a-10)

No doubt, Kabir relied on experience, but looked up to Guru to lead from darkness to light. About his Guru also there are quite a few teasing questions. Who was his Guru? Was it Ramanand or Sheikh Taqqui? Some scholars opine that Kabir had no Guru. He used this word for God. Kabir's faith that Guru is greater than God, cancel the conjecture of his being '*nigura*', one without a Guru. Others are of the view that Ramanand was his Guru and Kabir was initiated in a strange way. The story says that Kabir stretched himself across the steps leading to the Ganges where Ramanand used to go for his pre-dawn bath. Tripping over Kabir and fearing danger to him, he cried out 'Ram, Ram', which Kabir took as his *mantra*. Somehow, it is difficult to accept such conduct from a person like Kabir. Moreover, Ramanand is credited with abolishing the barriers of caste. He had quite a few disciples from the low-caste. If so, why should he be reluctant to accept Kabir? Was it because of his different creed? Wonder, if Ramanand could have such qualms, but Kabir did not have. He

denounced such divisions and declared himself as belonging to no house, Hindu or Muslim, as he said in one of his songs:

"As a trader spreads
all his wares,
this universe He spawns;

yet, one burns,
and the other buries
fed up, I left both homes."

(a-6)

Such an announcement in the times of Kabir carried serious repercussions. Indifferent to them, Kabir adhered to his convictions. He was "a Free Spirit"[2] though he was a slave of his master. He was a rebel yet an ardent devotee of the Lord. He lived in want and poverty, but was dowered with rich resources of peace and happiness. Like a pearl in the heart of a shell, he was born of agony and abrasion, but the luster of the pearl was matchless. It glowed then and is still glowing in all its glory. Now a glimpse of his age.

THE TIME

It was a turbulent time. Society was divided in the name of caste, creed, and class. Despair, distrust, and depression

were its hallmarks. Religion was the root cause of division. It was wedded to politics which to quote Dr. Ramkumar Verma, "was like a mirror at the crossroads; whoever could pick it up would try to see only his face, but before he could see it well, the mirror was snatched."[3] The kings, the then politicians, were engaged in waging wars to expand their power.

In spite of having ruled India for a century, the Muslim kings felt no love for the land or its people. Their main aim was to live in luxury, build palaces, and convert the natives into Muslims. So mutual distrust and disliking divided the people from their king. The fear of conversion to Islam made the Hindus cling to their social and religious forms with fanaticism, alien to them. Actually for the first time they had confronted such an organized religious sect. It posed a threat to them. Sikandar Lodi could not brook the Hindus who refused to embrace Islam.

It is really ironical that Islam, meaning compassion for all, came to India on the point of sword. The zealots forced their faith on the natives without converting their hearts and minds. The converted Hindus adopted the new faith like holding a banner in hand while

joining a procession. They continued to worship their gods and goddesses also. They were half Hindu and half Muslim. Kabir's family too seems to belong to this class.

The division based on caste was another curse of the Hindu society. Having outlived its utility, it had become a noose around the neck. The tag of 'untouchable' attached to the Shudras tells tales of their social exploitation and personal sufferings. The temple doors were closed to them. Totally dejected, they seemed to have lost all hopes of redemption. Kabir's age also saw the emergence of several religious sects. Each sect worshipped its 'god' with a zeal bordering on fanaticism, and looked down on the other.

Thus society available to Kabir had fanatic Hindus, fanatic Muslims, with a sprinkling of half Hindus and half-Muslims. Equally ignorant of the spirit of religion, they were devoid of mutual understanding. They rather looked upon each other as opponents. The Muslim rulers cherished a sacred wish to establish Islam as the only religion, hence favoured the Muslims. This lent a political hue to the division. The alliance born of the nexus of the priests and politicians added

fuel to the fire. The rulers turned despotic and let loose a reign of terror.

The chaotic conditions prevailing in Kabir's age were the cause as well as the consequence of such divisions. They lay at the root of the individual distress and social conflicts. To hope for peace from such a society was, to quote Dr. Ramkumar Verma, to expect "a flower to exhale fragrance even when its petals have been plucked apart and scattered far and wide."[4]

Insecure and apprehensive, both Hindus and Muslims stuck to their religious and social forms and rituals for security: the former afraid of being uprooted and the latter anxious to plant themselves. Rituals replaced religion. The heads of the two creeds, *Mullah* and *Pandey*, instead of weaning them from such a folly, made them sink deeper into it. "The public mind was so tainted by these rituals and conventions that truth just could not reflect itself upon it."[5] Confusion and chaos had become the order of the day. There was darkness all around. However, it is the darkest before the dawn.

It was at this point of the time that, "...like a sudden flash of lightening, something new dawned in the dark sky. It

was the Bhakti movement,"[6] remarked Mr. Grierson. This *Nirguna Bhakti Dhara* brought from the South by Ramananda was carried to masses by Kabir.

If the *Saguna* mode of devotion softened the drudgery of the outer rituals with inner love, that of *Nirguna* rejected the rituals themselves; the former sought the support of the scriptures, the latter relied on experience; the former worshipped God as an entity apart from the self (as an idol in the temple); the latter found Him pervading within and without. The *Nirguna* mode suited Kabir's temperament and the needs of his age better than the *Saguna,* though he adopted both and eventually dropped both of them. With such a beacon light, he began his crusade against the forces of darkness.

A messenger of light, Kabir carried the light of love, knowledge and freedom to the suffering humanity. Professing the equality of all before God, he infused a new hope in the hearts of the downtrodden. He exhorted people to see that all divisions were delusions because the same spirit rolls in all the objects, and there is just one God:

"All are imbued with one God,
who is ascetic? Who is scholar?
Who is serf and who is lord?
Who is patient? Who is doctor?"

(u-27)

A Messiah of the pariahs, he uplifted the defeated and dejected members of society. He urged upon them to turn from the brick-house of God to His real temple in each heart. He challenged the contractors of religion:

"For Hindus in the temple,
and Muslims in the mosque,
God lives and rules only there;

Pray, where there is
no mosque, no temple,
who is the Lord over there?"

(a-48)

He tried to make people "understand the truth and with the help of that to establish unity in diversity."[7] Challenging the superiority of Brahmins, based on their birth, he lashed out at them that if they were superior by birth why did they enter the world like others? Why weren't they born differently?

Kabir saw how the social conventions

had hardened into blind beliefs. He also noticed how people indulged in greed, hypocrisy, and selfishness under the cover of religion. He refused to keep quiet. In an age when freedom of speech was unknown, he dared speak freely. He hit at the outer rituals ruthlessly. He defied all that tended to hide the truth and divide people. With this end in view, Kabir addressed his poems to the people trapped in ignorance. He quizzed Mullah for crowing from the top of a mosque as if God lived somewhere far off:

"Mullah, why so loudly
do you call?
Ram-Rahim vibrate in all."

(a-28)

He berated Pundit for deluding people into parrot like repetition of Rama's name:

"Pundit, what a lie you utter!
Only saying Ram redeems,
is mouth sweet by saying sugar?"

(a-4)

Kabir found it stupid of people to beg favours of a man-made stone-idol. Denouncing idol worship as mere deception, he chided the beguiled worshipper to give up such games and look

at the whole thing with an open mind:

"O beguiled flower girl,
each leaf you pluck is alive,
though lifeless is the idol
to which you offer them."

(a-39)

He derided the rituals of wearing a sacred mark on the forehead, a rosary around the neck, dips in holy rivers, or tonsuring etc. as hypocrisy:

"If one could find God
by going naked,
would not the deer find Him?"

(a-33)

Kabir highlighted the humbug of the *jogi* who colours the cloak but not the mind by pointing out his animal nature:

"Growing beard and hair,
jogi tears ears,
and looks like a goat."

(a-44)

He noticed how the deluded man, bearing the present miseries as the fruit of his previous *karma,* lived in the hope of happiness in the other world. Kabir—an awakened and rational poet of the present

scoffed at such conditioning of the mind. Ridiculing the heaven-hell theory as trash, he questioned its initiators:

"Who it is that dies?
And who is born here?
Who goes to hell or heaven?"

(u-3)

Further, he hammered the truth into their heads in stark naked words:

"Vessel in water,
water in the vessel,
water within and without;

the vessel crashes,
the waters re-merge,
That is the crux, say devout."

(u-3)

This is life—a clay pot filled with the water of eternity. He recommended his fellow beings to hope for happiness while alive, but without ignoring the truth that the world is a dream, and the soul is real, that we are mortals imbued with immortality. Our goal in life is to remember this truth, and merge in it. Blind to it, when people felt persecuted, he stood by their side, holding the torch. He pointed to the 'Promised Land', but told

them to rub their lamps clean, and claim the treasure lying hidden within themselves. By Guru's grace, he had found his. He had realised that the individual-soul was an inseparable part of the Over-soul:

"Wave of the river is just river,
do river and the wave differ?"

(u-36)

He advised the suffering masses to refrain from self-pity. Through the image of a lily, he exhorted them to know themselves, as that alone will end their misery:

"Why do you wither, O lily?
Water of the lake
is for you only."

(a-5)

But like a fool, man pines for the world of senses, hoping to get peace and happiness from it. He cautioned and counseled such folks to comprehend their ignorance and do the needful:

"O alien, recall your Love;
what is this obsession
that clouds your vision?"

(a-3)

From time immemorial, the individual-soul, obsessed with the world, has been wandering around like an orphan. It has forgotten all about its real home and has sunk in a deep sleep in an alien land. Kabir is worried that,

"Beguiled are not, one or two,
the whole world is beguiled."

(a-39)

Kabir alone was not beguiled because he was rooted in Ram. At peace with himself, he was upset to see how his fellow beings were suffering. Not only this, they had grown so numb that they did not mind being tossed by the turning wheel. Their sleep had grown into a swoon. They needed a Prince Charming to wake them up. Kabir tried to pierce their sleeping-self. with the arrow of the 'Word'.

About the Poems

His poems, known as *sabada or* 'Word', narrate his journey from sleep to awakening, from ignorance to knowledge, from mortality to immortality through the image of the individual-soul as a young bride who, lost in sleep, is unaware of having been separated from her Lord, but once awake, yearns for re-union.

The pain throbbing in his poems, is the pain of separation from the Lord. It is the pain of a helpless onlooker, seeing his brothers drowning. It is also the pain of not being heard or understood. 'Says Kabir, listen O saints' is not only his signature on the songs, but is also his passionate appeal to listen to the Word, and trace its source within the self. We fail to listen to it because our fickle mind is 'here, there, everywhere'.

Kabir knew that mind is an intangible but most powerful unit of humanity. It has

such a hold on us that led by it, to borrow the words of Sant Kripal Singh Ji, "we worship light and music outside, but ignore the flaming and sounding Word within, to which they point."[1] Eventually, we accept the symbols as truths. Moreover, the mind imposes its mobility on the immobile soul, and deprives the self of being established in the self. However, Kabir also believed that mind alone can alter the world by altering itself. The soul is a captive of the mind. Trying to free the soul from the hold of mind, he warns:

"Awaken ! behold,
your bed is barren,
He went away early,
leaving you alone."

(a-1)

Charmed by the world, the individual soul forgets that it is only a passing pilgrim through the world. The poet pleads with it to recall its real home:

"where your roots lie,
O swan, and
where are you going?"

(u-30)

It is only when the waters of devotion purify the mind that the soul is free from

the bondage of mind. Then it becomes aware of being separated from its true Love and yearns for Him in pain:

"O darling,
come home to me,
away from you,
life is a tale of misery."

(y-11)

Though divided, the soul is confident of its eternal bond with the Lord:

"As tongue is aware of
the agony of eyes,
ears of the agony of tongue."

(y-4)

Nevertheless, as water cannot evaporate unless it boils at 100° Celsius, union is not possible unless the intensity of yearning dissolves mind-body-consciousness. But rare are the souls that reach this peak and enjoy the intimacy Kabir shares with God:

"Lead me to redemption
if I am another,
but why mislead,
when there is none other?"

(u-1)

For the soul, immersed in Bliss, illusion of many vanishes, One alone remains:

"I keep dear Ram to myself,
whom should I tell?
There is none other."

(u-17)

Such a perception spells the end of ignorance, and the dawn of universal love. That is the core of religion. It also implies perfect harmony between head and heart, between knowledge and love, between the outer and the inner worlds. According to Dr. Ajay Tiwari, such a union "...means the oneness of Hindus and Muslims, oneness of Brahmins and Shudras, and oneness of man and woman."[2] It implies the union of divine and human. Kabir is sure that it will definitely occur one day:

"Thirty-three crore gods
and hermits,
eighty-eight thousand,

all have come to see, says Kabir
the rare phenomenon:
my marrying an Immortal man!"

(u-10)

The number of sages and gods is

indicative of the population of India at that time. All the human beings are micro-gods, groping their way to godhood. Where else can we have such a poetry of hope and joy?

His creed is love. It simply connects. His poetry assures the despaired humanity that God is nothing but Love. He is a personal experience. Invisible and inexpressible, He is known to each differently. He is the inner-self of all. He is neither in mosque nor in temple. He is in every heart, in that indivisible space which Kabir refers to as the void between the breaths. Every breath brings His message, but lost in sleep we cannot hear it. We need a Kabir to awaken us.

Actually, every age needs a Kabir to keep it awake, but our dear, benighted century requires Kabir the most. In spite of two thousand years of civilization behind us, the barbarian in us is still active. We have reached the Moon, but not the hearts of our fellow beings. We are exploring the Space, but not our minds. Well connected we may be by the fastest means of transport, but we are still divided by distrust and derision. We are still locked in the cells of caste and creed. Though proud of our achievements in the field of

science, we are ashamed of the carnage and violence, our age witnessed in the name of religion. This so-called religion, divorced of reason and emotions, is worse than "opium of the masses," Marx termed it as. The opium benumbs the mind and senses, but drunk on such a religion, we turn monsters and "like ignorant armies clash by night."[3]

Six hundred years ago, when such a 'night' enveloped humanity, Kabir appeared and alerted the 'ignorant' people. He admonished them to wake up and see. He tried to de-addict them from the outer world of senses, and re-connect to that of the soul. His 'Rama-wine' instead of inducing insensibility to pain, was known for sharpening its awareness. He invited folks to join him for such a drink, but demanded their head in return. Soon he discovered that rare were his friends as:

"rare are wives
who love their husbands."

(u-8)

Since then, he has been crying in wilderness for fellowship, not for 'followers'. The gap in communication divides us from him. In his poems, we look for his views of God and religion, and fail to see that dowered with a clear head,

a loving heart, and an efficient hand, he himself was the living picture of true religion. We revere him as a seer, but fear befriending him. The day we are friends, religion in its true sense will perhaps dawn on us and will unite us with humanity. Only then we shall pay our long due homage to Kabir.

It is high time that we absorb his message of love, compassion, and universal brotherhood. Let each one of us be "a messenger of selfless love and peace,"[4] to quote Sri Sri Mata Amritanandmayi Devi, lighthouse of love and compassion. No lesson of personal happiness and social harmony can be simpler than this. Kabir sang such simple songs of love, peace, and harmony in an age of discord.

For ages we have been longing for this light of love and peace, but ironically enough, we tend to turn our back to it. Like musk deer, we run for it here and there while it lies within us. As Kabir assures us that it is not lost, it is only lost to sight. Though near, it is far off and *vice-versa*.

What if it appears to be far off and the way to it is steep and slippery, as Kabir himself says! Shielded by Guru's grace, and strengthened by self-discipline, let us

move ahead with a will to regain this lost paradise of the self and find a way out of the present violence and carnage. Let us try to 'listen' to what Kabir says and begin the journey from the self. The way to peace in the world within and outside lies through selfless love and service of suffering humanity. Love, to quote Shakespeare, is "star to every wandering bark,"[5] and it is the bedrock of Kabir's poetry.

Kabir is beyond the reach of paltry words. I dare not claim to have fully grasped him. I am a novice, just preparing for the journey by my Guru's grace. This book is an humble attempt to 'listen' to what Kabir says to heal the sores of the ailing hearts and minds of our age.

The selection of just one-hundred and ten poems out of such a vast store is very difficult, as most of them are equally appealing. The division of the poems in three groups, i.e. awakening, yearning, and union respectively, is only for the sake of convenience in comprehending the particular angle from which the poems are seen in this collection. It is just one of the angles of his prismatic genius. He is as a critic has remarked ' all things to all men'.

—*Sushila Mahajan*

TRANSLATION

- AWAKENING
- YEARNING
- UNION

AWAKENING

a-1

जाग पियारी अब क्या सोवै ।
रैन गई दिन काहे को खोवै ।।
जिन जागा तिन मानिक पाया ।
तैं बौरी सब सोय गँवाया ।।
पिय तेरे चतुर तू मूरख नारी ।
कबहुँ न पिय की सेज सँवारी ।।
तैं बौरी बौरापन कीन्ही ।
भर-जोबन पिय अपन न चीन्ही ।।
जाग देख पिय सेज न तेरे ।
ताहि छाँड़ि उठि गये सबेरे ।।
कहै कबीर सोई धुन जागै ।
शब्द-बान उर-अंतर लागै ।।

Wake up, O dear,
why still you sleep ?
The night is gone,
why lose the day ?

He found the jewel,
who kept awake,
lost in sleep,
you missed all.

Your lover is wise,
you are a fool,
you never bedecked
the bridal-bed.

What a crazy thing
you did, O fool,
all through youth
you never knew Him!

Awaken ! behold,
your bed is barren,
He went away early,
leaving you alone.

The sleeping-self
awakens Kabir,
as arrow of the Word
pierces the heart.

a-2

तोको पीव मिलेंगे, घूँघट के पट खोल रे ।
घट-घट में वही सांई रमता, कटुक वचन मत बोल रे ।
धन-जोबन का गरब न कीजै, झूठा पंचरंग चोल रे ।
सुन्न महल में दियरा बार ले, आसा सों मत डोल रे ।
जोग-जुगत सो रंगमहल में, पिय पाई अनमोल रे ।
कहै कबीर आनंद भयौ है, बाजत अनहद ढोल रे ।

Lift your veils,
you will find the Lord.

Say harsh words to none,
Lord alone
is all-pervasive.

Pride not on wealth and youth,
five hued cloak
is illusive.

Light a lamp
in the Void-palace,
waver not from faith.

With yoga-ways
in the festive-hall,
meet the precious Lord.

Bliss abounds, says Kabir,
the drum-divine resounds.

a-3

अरे परदेसी पींव पिंछानी ।
कहा भयौ तोकौं समझि न परई, लागि कैसी बांनि ।।
भौमि बिडानी मैं कहा रातौ, कहा कियो कहि मोहि ।
लाहै कारनि मूल गंवावै, समझावत हूँ तोहि ।।
निसि दिन तोहि क्यूँ नींद परत है, चितवत नाहिं ताही ।
जंम से वैरी सिर परि ढाड़े, पर हाथ कहा बिकाई ।।
झूठे परपच में कहा लागौ, ऊठै नांही चालि ।
कहै कबीर कछु विलम न कीजै, कौनैं देखी काल्हि ।।

O alien, recall your Love;
what is this obsession
that clouds your vision?

Why are you fond of
the foreign place?
Lose capital for interest!
Pray, try to see.

Why are you sleeping
and failing to see?
Death lies very close yet
you are selling yourself?

Why waste life in futile things?
Why not get up and go?
Defer no more, says Kabir,
who has seen tomorrow?

a-4

पंडित बाद बदंते झूठा ।
रांम कह्याँ दुनियां गति पावै, षांड कह्याँ मुख मीठा ।।
पावक कह्याँ पाव जे दाझैं, जल कहि त्रिषा बुझाई ।
भोजन कह्याँ भूष जे भाजै, तौ सब कोई तिरि जाई ।।
नर कै साथि सूवा हरि बोलै, हरि परताप न जानै ।
जो कबहूँ उड़ि जाइ जंगल मैं, बहुरि न सुरतैं आनै ।।
साची प्रीति बिषै माया सूं, हरि भगतनि सूं हासी ।
कहै कबीर प्रेम नहीं उपज्यौ, बाँध्यौ जमपुरि जासी ।।

Pundit, what a lie you utter!
Only saying Ram redeems,
is mouth sweet by saying sugar?

If saying fire singes the foot,
saying water quenches thirst,
saying food appeases hunger,
all will go across the ocean.

The mimic parrot chants Hari,
but knows not His fame,
away from man in the forest,
it never recalls the name.

You love the sensual-world,
and laugh at Hari's lovers;
says Kabir, if you love not Hari,
trussed up you will go to Hell.

a-5

काहे री नलनीं तूं कुमिलांनीं ।
तेरे हीं नालि सरोवर पांनीं ।।
जल मैं उतपति जल मैं बास ।
जल में नलनी तोर निवास ।।
न तलि तपति न ऊपरि आगि ।
तोर हेतु कहु कासनि लागि ।।
कहै कबीर जे उदिक समान ।
ते नहीं मूए हंमारे जान ।।

Why do you wither, O lily?
Water of the lake is
for you only.

Born in water,
you live on water,
your final place is water.

From earth or heaven
no fire sears, yet !
Pray, for whom do you pine?

Sure is Kabir,
they never wither
who are one with water.

a-6

रे यामैं क्या मेरा क्या तेरा,
लाज न मरहिं कहत घर मेरा ।।
चारि पहर निस भोरा,
जैसे तरवर पंखि बसेरा ।।
जैसे बनिये हाट पसारा,
सब जग का सो सिरजनहारा ।।
ये ले जारै वै ले गाड़ै,
इनि दुखी इनि दोऊ घर छाड़े ।।
कहत कबीर सुनहु रे लोई,
हम तुम बिनसि रहैगा सोई ।।

Look, nothing belongs
to you or me,
shame! you call it your home.

As birds roost on a tree
for the night,
a few hours till the dawn;

as a trader spreads
all his wares,
this universe He spawns;

yet; one burns, and
the other buries,
fed up, I left both homes.

Says Kabir, listen, O Loi;
you and I will perish,
He alone will always live.

a-7

बिनसि जाइ कागद की गुड़िया ।
जब लग पवन तबै लग उड़िया ।।
गुड़िया को सबद अनाहद बोलै ।
खसम लीयैं कर डोरी डोलै ।।
पवन थक्यौ गुड़िया ठहरांनी ।
सीस धुनि धुनि रोवै प्रांनी ।।
कहै कबीर भजि सारंगपांनी ।
नही तर ह्वैहै खींचातांनी ।।

The paper-kite will perish,
it wings its way
till the air is active.

Unstruck-word it utters
as the master
plays the string, but,

no sooner does the air wane
than it flounders, and
all begin to weep and wail.

Worship Lord Rama,
says Kabir, to save
your kite from such a fate.

a-8

मन रे तन कागद का पुतला ।
लागै बूँद बिनसि जाइ छिन में, गरब करे क्या इतना ।।
माटी खोदहिं भीत उसारैं, अंध कहै घर मेरा ।
आवै तलब बाँधि लै चालैं, बहुरि न करिहै फेरा ।।
खोट कपट करि यहु धन जोरयो, लैं धरती मैं गाड़यौ ।
रोक्यो घटि साँस नहीं निकसै, ठौर ठौर सब छाड़यौ ।।
कहै कबीर नट नाटिक थाके, मंदला कौन बजावै ।
गये पषनियाँ उझरी बाजी, को काहू के आवै ।।

O mind,
body is nothing
but a paper-puppet,
why be proud of it?
A drop will kiss it
to death.

O fool,
raising a few walls,
you call it your home,
when summons arrive,
bound you go,
never to return.

When the castle
is besieged,
breath is arrested within,
wealth amassed by fraud
is left behind,
buried.

The players are tired,
who will play the drum?
When no choir,
no concert is there,
then, says Kabir,
who cares for whom?

a-9

मोको कहाँ ढूंढे बंदे, मैं तो तेरे पास में ।
ना मैं देवल ना मैं मस्जिद, ना काबे कैलास में ।।
ना तो कौने क्रिया-कर्म में, नहीं योग बैराग में ।
ना मैं छगरी ना मैं भेड़ी, ना मैं छुरी गँडास में ।
नहीं खाल में नहीं पूँछ में, ना हड्डी ना माँस में ।
खोजी होय तो तुरतै मिलिहौ, पल भर की तालास में ।।
कहै कबीर सुनो भाई साधो, सब स्वाँसों की साँस में ।

Where do you look for me, dear?
I am closer than close to you.

Neither in temple-mosque am I,
nor in Kaba-Kailash,
nor in rituals, nor in yoga-ways.

Neither in goat-sheep am I,
nor in axe-knife,
nor in skin-tail, nor in flesh and bone.

He who yearns, finds at once,
far from the crowd,
I live in a quiet refuge.

Listen to me in the void, says Kabir.
in between all the breaths.

a-10

तीरथ में तो सब पानी है,
होवे नही कछु अन्हाय देखा ।
प्रतिमा सकल तो जड़ है भाई,
बोले नही बोलाय देखा ।
पुरान कोरान सबै बात है,
या घट का परदा खोल देखा ।
अनुभव की बात कबीर कहै,
यह सब है झूठी पोल देखा ।

All the holy-places are just rivers,
they wash off nothing;
I have had a bath in them.

All the idols are lifeless, brother,
they feel nothing;
I have cried to them.

Koran and Puran are just words,
they reveal nothing;
I have seen beyond the cover.

All that is not felt on the pulse,
says Kabir,
is simply hollow and false.

a-11

ना जानै तेरा साहब कैसा है ।
मस्जिद भीतर मुल्ला पुकारै,
क्या तेरा साहब बहरा है ।
चिउँटी के पग नेवर बाजे,
सो भी साहब सुनता है ।
माला फेरी तिलक लगाया,
लंबी जटा बढ़ाता है ।
अंतर तेरे कुफर-कटारी,
यों नहीं साहब मिलता है ।

I wonder
who your Lord is !

Mullah in the mosque
calls out so loud,
is your Lord deaf?

The Lord hears
the tinkling anklets
on the feet of an ant.

What of wearing tilak,
growing matted-locks,
or telling your beads?

You cannot meet Lord
till you carry within
the dagger of disbelief.

a-12

संतौ धोखा कासूं कहिय ।
गुंण में निरगुंण निरगुंण मैं गुंण है, बाट छाँड़ि क्यूँ बहिये ।
अजरा अमरा कथै सब कोई, अलख न कथणां जाई ।
नाति सरूप बरण नहीं जाकै, घटि घटि रह्यौ समाई ।
प्यंड ब्रह्मंड कथै सब कोई, वाकै आदि अरु अंत न होई ।
प्यंड ब्रह्मंड छांड़ि जे कथिये, कहै कबीर हरि सोई ।

Saints, with whom
to share this mystery?

Why go astray from the Truth?
Forms express the formless
and formless is in forms.

Immortal, Immutable He is,
but the Invisible,
cannot be put in words.

He has no form, no class,
'not this', 'not that', they say,
but all the forms are His.

He has no beginning, no end,
but in each vessel, and
in the universe He is.

God is beyond the universe,
and the body as well, says Kabir.

a-13

पषा पषी कै पेषणैं सब जगत भुलांनां ।
निरपष होई हरि भजै, सो साध सयांनां ।।
ज्यूं षर सूं षर बांधिया, यूं बंधे सब लोई ।
जाकै आतम द्रिष्टि है, साँचा जन सोई ।।
एक एक जिनि जांणियाँ, तिनही सच पाया ।
प्रेम प्रीति ल्यौ लींन मन, ते बहुरि न आया ।।
पूरे की पूरी द्रिष्टि, पूरा करि देखै ।
कहै कबीर कछु समझि न परई, या कछु बात अलेखै ।।

Where all are beguiled
by for or against,
he alone is wise who
drops both to think of Hari.

Where all are tied, O Loi,
like mule to mule
he alone is free
who has an inner-eye.

He who walks alone
finds the Truth,
absorbed in the One,
he never comes back again.

The vision is whole,
and whole is everything yet
fail to comprehend, says Kabir
as untellable that is.

a-14

सोहम् हंसा एक समान,
काया के गुण आंनहि आंण ।
माटी एक सकल संसारा,
बहु विधि भाँडे घड़ै कुँभारा ।
पंच बरन दस दुहिये गाइ,
एक दूध देखौ पतियाइ ।
कहै कबीर संसा करि दूरि,
त्रिभुवननाथ रह्या भरपूर ।

'That is me' is 'I am that',
attributes vary
in varying forms.

Clay is the same,
takes different shapes
in the Potter's hands.

Seeing is believing,
ten cows of five colours
give milk of one colour.

Why have doubts, says Kabir?
That Lord alone pervades
all the three worlds.

a-15

जियरा जाहिगौ मैं जांनां ।
जो देख्या सो बहुरि न पेष्या, माटी सूं लपटांनां ।।
बाकुल बसतर किता पहिरबा, का तप बनखंडि बासा ।
कहा मुगध रे पांहन पूजै, का जल डारै गाता ।।
कहै कबीर सुर-मुनि उपदेसा, लोका पंथि लगाई ।
सुनौ संतौ सुमिरौ भगत जन, हरि बिन जनम गंवाई ।।

Living beings will go, I know,
who I see this moment
is not there the next,
but biting the dust.

What of wearing bark
or going to the woods?
What of serving a stone-idol
or holy dips, O fool?

The words of seers lead, says Kabir,
from darkness to light,
be led by them, O saints,
else life goes in vain.

a-16

का माँगू कुछ थिर न रहाई,
देखत नैन चल्या जग जाई ।।
इक लख पूत सवा लख नाती,
ता रावन घरि दिवा न बाती ।।
लंका सा कोट समंद सी खाई,
ता रावन की खबरि न पाई ।।
आवत संग न जात संगाती,
कहा भयौ दरि बाँधे हाथी ।।
कहै कबीर अंत की बारी,
हाथ झाड़ि जैसै चले जुआरी ।।

What to ask for ?
Nothing stays forever,
the world slides on,
all the time.

Not an heir survived
Ravana, the father of
one lac sons,
to offer libations.

A fort like Lanka
with ocean as trenches,
but not a sign remains
of its Lord.

What of wealth here?
Nothing accompanies
as you enter
or exit this world.

At the end you leave,
says Kabir,
like a gambler,
with empty hands.

a-17

कहा नर गरबसि थोरी बात ।
मन दस नाज, टका दस गठिया, टेड़ौ टेड़ौ जात ।।
कहा लै आयौ यहु धन कोऊ, कहा कोऊ लै जात ।
दिवस चार की है पतिसाही, ज्यूँ हरियल पाँत ।।
राजा भयो गाँव सौ पायौ, टका लाख दस व्रात ।
रावन हात लंक को छत्रपति, पल में गई बिहात ।।
माता पिता लोक सुत वनिता, अंत न चले संगात ।
कहै कबीर रांम भजि बौरे, जनम अकारथ जात ।।

O Man,
why brag of trifles?

A bagful of money,
a sack of wheat,
make you swagger so!

Who brought it along,
and who will take it
back with him?

What if you got
power and prestige,
on being a king?

Short living
is this ownership,
like leaves of a tree.

Ravana, the ruler of Lanka,
lost everything,
in the twinkling of an eye.

Mother, father, wife,
son or friend,
none follows beyond the end.

Worship Ram, O dunce,
says Kabir,
else life goes waste.

a-18

रहना नहिं देस बिराना है ।
यह संसार कागद की पुड़िया, बूंद पड़े घुल जाना है ।
यह संसार काँटों की बाड़ी, उलझ-पुलझ मरि जाना है ।
यह संसार झाड़ औ झाँखड़, आग लगे बरि जाना है ।
कहत कबीर सुनो भई साधो, सतगुरु नाम ठिकाना है ।

This world is an alien place,
I will linger here no more.

This world is a paper-packet,
its going to melt
at the fall of a water-drop.

This world is a ring of thorns,
its going to trap
and twine to death.

This world is a pile of rubble,
its going to be ashes
when put on fire.

Says Kabir, listen, O saints,
in the Word of Sataguru
lies my home.

a-19

काहे रे मन दह दिसि धावै ।
विषिया संग संतोष न पावै ।।
जहाँ जहाँ कलपै तहाँ तहाँ बँधना ।
रतन को थाल कियौ तैं रंधना ।।
जो पै सुख पइयत इन मांहीं ।
तौ राज छांड़ि कत वन को जांहीं ।।
आनंद सहज तजौ विष नारी ।
इब क्या झीखै पतित भिखारी ।।
कहै कबीर यहु सुख दिन चारि ।
तजि विषिया भजि चरन मुरारि ।।

O Mind, why do you run
in ten directions?
There lies no joy
in the lap of senses.

Each wish is a blinker,
O fool, you go blind,
and ruin the diamond pot
by cooking the meals.

Were there peace
in the sensual world,
who will leave the palace
for life in the woods?

Why do you whimper,
O wretched beggar?
Bliss will be yours
refrain from lethal joys.

Short living are these,
give them up, says Kabir,
and always revere
the feet of Murari.

a-20

जागहु रे नर सोवहु कहा ।
जंम बटपारै रूँधे पहा ।।
जागि चेति कछू करौ उपाइ ।
मोटा बैरी है जंमराई ।।
सेत काग आये बन मांहि ।
अजहूं रे नर चेतै नांहि ।।
कहै कबीर तबै नर जागै ।
जम का डंड मूंड मैं लागै ।।

Wake up, O man,
why do you sleep?
death lies in wait.

Awaken! beware,
and find a way,
a mighty foe is death.

White birds have landed
in the woods,
yet man is not alert.

Man wakes up,
when the rod of death
hits on the head, says Kabir.

a-21

मन रे कागद कीर पराया ।
कहा भयौ व्यौपार तुम्हारे, कलतर बढ़ै सवाया ।।
बड़े बोहरै सांठों दीन्हीं, कलतर काढ़यो खोटे ।
चारलाख अरू असी ठीक दे, जनम लिख्यौ सब चोटे ।।
अब की बेर न कागद कीरयौ, तौ धरमरांई सूं तूटै ।
पूंजी बितड़ी बंदि लै दैहें, तब कहै कौन के छूटै ।।
गुरदेव ग्यांनी भई लगनियाँ, सुमिरन दीन्हौं हीरा ।
बड़ी निसरनी नांव रांम कौ, चढ़ि गयौ कीर कबीरा ।।

Remember, O mind,
to pay your dues,
amassing makes
no business sense.

You cheated once,
the big-merchant,
paying back fake
for genuine coins.

Caught, O dunce,
you did atone with
eighty-four million
lives, hence.

If now you err
and fail the promise,
the judgement
will be very severe.

Your assets frozen,
and you under arrest,
who will bail you out
then?

I offered myself
to my Sataguru
who gave me
the diamond of Name.

Such is the ladder
of the name of Ram
Kabir ascends it
to clear all arrears.

a-22

कैसे होइगा मिलावा हरि सना ।
रे तूं विषै विकार न तजि मनां ।।
रे तैं जोग जुगुति जान्याँ नहीं ।
तैं गुर का सबद मान्याँ नहीं ।।
गंदी देही देखि न फूलिये ।
संसार देखि न भूलिये ।।
कहै कबीर मन बहु गुंनि ।
हरि भगति बिनां दुख फुन फुंनी ।।

How can you meet Hari?
You never gave up
your love for the senses.

Neither paid heed to
the word of Guru
nor to the yoga-ways.

Be not deceived
by worldly-beauty,
brag not of filthy-body.

Says Kabir, I know
sorrows always recur,
if you do not give in to Hari.

a-23

ऐसे लोगनि सूँ का कहिये ।
जे नर भये भगति थैं न्यारे । तिनथैं सदा डराते रहिये ।।
आपण देही चरवाँ पाँनी । ताहि निंदै जिनि गंगा आनी ।।
आपण बूड़ै और कौ बोड़ै । अगनि लगाइ मंदिर मैं सोवै ।।
आपण अंध और कूँ काँनाँ । तिनकौ देखि कबीर डराँनाँ ।।

How to deal with people,
who are devoid of piety?
Better avoid them.

They won't even give
a drop of water,
but censure them
who brought the Ganges.

Sunk in the mire,
they pull down others;
provoking a fire,
they find their peace.

Blind they are,
but laugh at one-eyed,
Kabir is scared of them.

a-24

जाइ परौ हमरौ का करिहै । आप करै आपै दुख भरिहै ।।
ऊंझड़ जातां राह बतावै । जो न चलै तौ बहु दुख पावै ।।
अंधे कूप क दिया बताई । तरकि पड़े पुनि हरि न पत्याई ।।
इंद्री स्वादि विषै रसि बहिहै । नरकि पड़े पुंनि रांम न कहिहै ।।
पंच सखी मिलि मतौ उपायौ । जंम की पासी हंस बंधायौ ।।
कहै कबीर प्रतीति न आवै । पाषंड कपट इहै जिय भावै ।।

Who can stop
if you opt for a fall?
You will suffer
for what you do.

If you do not
heed the guide,
you lose your way
in the wild;

you are warned
O faithless,
yet argue and fall
in the blind well;

led astray
by sensual-joys
you land in hell,
yet say not Ram;

beguiled, O fool,
by your five friends,
you allow death
to noose your neck.

a-25

चलन-चलन सबकों कहत है,
नां जानौं बैकुंठ कहाँ है ।
जोजन एक प्रमिति नहीं जानैं,
बातनिं ही बैकुंठ बखानै ।।
जब लग है बैकुंठ की आसा,
तब लग नही हरि चरन निवासा ।।
कहै सुनै कैसे पतिअइये,
जब लग तहाँ आप नही जइये ।।
कहै कबीर यहु कहिये काहि,
साध संगति बैकुंठहि आहि ।।

Every one talks of
going to heaven,
but no one knows
where it lies?

They know not
how to gauge a mile,
but portray
heaven so well.

If longing for heaven
lingers in the heart,
you find no refuge
at the feet of Hari.

How can I believe
what they say
unless I myself
go to heaven?

Heaven lies in
the company of saints,
but how to make them
see it, says Kabir?

a-26

पानी बिच मीन पियासी ।
मोहि सुनि सुनि आवै हाँसी ।।
घर में बस्तु नजर नहिं आवत ।
बन बन फिरत उदासी ।।
आतमज्ञान बिना जग झूठा ।
क्या मथुरा क्या काशी ।।

How funny !
In the midst of water
a fish thirsts for water.

The thing lies at home,
but searching for it,
in the woods, they roam.

Without self knowledge,
the world is false,
be it Mathura or Kashi.

a-27

कौन बिचारि करत हौ पूजा ।
आतम रॉम अवर नहीं दूजा ।।
बिन प्रतीतैं पाती तोड़ै ।
ग्याँन बिनाँ देवलि सिर फोड़ै ।।
लुचरी लपसी आप संघारे ।
द्वारै ठाढ़ा राम पुकारै ।।
पर आतम जौ तत बिचारै ।
कहि कबीर ताकै बलिहारै ।।

As you worship, dear,
whom do you recall?
Ram is none other
than inner-self in all.

Without such a faith,
you pluck the leaves,
and hit your head
against the temple wall.

You guzzle away all
the savoury food,
Ram begs at the door,
you are deaf to his call.

Kabir will happily
offer him all,
who is able to see
his own self in all.

a-28

मुलां कहाँ पुकारै दूरि ।
रांम रहीम रह्या भरपूरि ।।
यहु तौ अल्लाह गूंगा नांही ।
देखै खलक दुनीं दिल मांही ।।
हरि गुंन गाइ बंग मैं दीन्हां ।
काम क्रोध दोऊ बिसमल कीन्हां ।।
कहै कबीर यह मुलनां झूठा ।
रांम रहीम सबनि मैं दीठा ।।

Mullah, why so loudly
do you call?
Ram-Rahim vibrate in all.

Allah is not deaf and dumb;
look for Him
in the world, in the heart.

When glorifying God,
I called for prayer,
offering my ire and desire,

I found the Mullah beguiled,
for I beheld, says Kabir,
Ram-Rahim in all.

a-29

बोलनाँ का कहिये रे भाई ।
बोलत बोलत तत नसाई ।।
बोलत बोलत बढ़ै बिकारा ।
बिन बोल्यां क्यूं होइ बिचारा ।।
संत मिलै कछु कहिये कहिये ।
मिलै असंत मुष्टि करि रहिये ।।
ग्यांनी सूं बोल्या हितकारी ।
मूरिख सूं बोल्यां झष मारी ।।
कहै कबीर आधा घट डोलै ।
भरया होइ तौ मुषां न बोलै ।।

What to say of talks?
Talking, my brother,
chokes the Truth.

It causes ill-will, but,
for sharing thoughts
talking is the route.

So, pray to a saint
to say some words,
they are useful;

say nothing to a fool,
and heed him not,
his words bear no fruit.

A half-full pot makes noise,
the full-one, says Kabir,
passes quietly with poise.

a-30

लोका मति के भोरा रे ।
जो कासी तन तजै कबीरा, तो रामहि कहाँ निहोरा रे ।।
तब हम वैसे अब हम ऐसे, इहै जनम का लाहा ।
ज्यूँ जल में जल पैसि न निकले, यूँ ठुरि मिल्या जुलाहा ।।
राम भगति परिजाकौ हित चित, ताकौ अचरज काहा ।
गुर प्रसाद साध की संगति, जग जीतें जाइ जुलाहा ।।
कहै कबीर सुनहुं रे संतौ, भ्रंमि परै जिनि कोई ।
जस कासी तस मगहर ऊसर, हिरदैं रांम रति होई ।।

Folks, how naive you are!
If Kabir dies at Kashi,
what of the glory of Ram?

From what I was
to what I am, is just
the profit of this life.

As water from water
is inseparable,
so is Kabir from Ram.

By Guru's grace
I found the saints,
who anchored me to Ram.

No wonder then,
a mere weaver
could conquer the world.

Listen O saints,
says Kabir,
let none have qualms;

barren Magahar
is as Kashi, if
heart is full of Ram.

a-31

माया मोहि मोहि हित कीन्हा ।
ताथै मेरौ ग्यांन ध्यांन हर लीन्हा ।।
संसार ऐसा सुपिन जैसा, जीव न सुपिन समांन ।
साँच करि नर गाँठि बाँध्यौ, छाड़ि परम निधान ।।
नैन नेह पतंग हुलसै, पसू न पेखै आगि ।
काल पासि मुगध बांध्या, कनक कांमिनीं लागि ।।
करि विचार बिकार परिहरि, तिरण तारण सोइ ।
कहै कबीर रघुनाथ भजि नर, दूजा नांही कोई ।।

What a favour
Maya has done me!
Relieved me of wisdom
by ensnaring me.

The world is a shadow,
while the soul is real,
man treasures the trash,
but throws away the pearl.

Blinded by light,
to death a moth singes,
you too seek gold and lust,
as death on you impinges.

Beware! Refrain from evils,
worship Ram, says Kabir,
He alone can redeem,
none else is there.

a-32

जो पैं पिय के मनि नहीं भांयैं,
तौ का पारोसनि के हुलरायैं ।।
कहा चूरा पायल झमकायैं,
कहा भयौ बिछुआ ठमकायैं ।।
का काजर सिंदूर कै दीयैं,
सोलह सिंगार कहा भयौ कीयैं ।।
अंजन मंजन करै ठगौरी,
का पचि मरै निगौड़ी बौरी ।।
जौ पैं पतिव्रता ह्वै नारी,
कैसे ही रहौ सो पियहि पियारी ।।
तन मन जीवन सौंपि सरीरा,
ताहि सुहागिन कहै कबीरा ।।

What of the neighbours' praise,
if she fails to please her man?

What of clinking bangles,
anklets or toe-ornaments,
if she fails to please her man?

What of wearing kohl, vermilion
or elaborate make-up,
if she fails to please her man?

What of bathing or adorning,
it is labour to beguile,
if she fails to please her man?

A wife devoted to her husband
is dear to him,
whatever she may look like.

Happily married is she, says Kabir,
who offers her Lord all she has.

a-33

का नांगे का बाँधे चांम, जौ नहीं चीन्हसि आतम रांम ।।
नांगे फिरें जोग जे होई, वन का मृग मुकुति गया कोई ।।
मूड़ मूड़ायैं जौ सिधि होई, श्रगहि भेड़ न पहुंती कोई ।।
ब्यंद राखि जे खिलिहैं भाई, तौ खुसरै कौंण परंम गति पाई ।।
पढ़ै गुनें उपजै अहंकार, अधधर डूबे बार न पार ।।
कहै कबीर सुनहु रे भाई, रांम नांम बिन किनि सिधि पाई ।।

What of going naked
or wearing a sack-cloth,
if you see not Ram in all?

If one could find God
by going naked,
would not the deer find Him?

If one could reach heaven
by tonsuring,
would not the sheep be there?

If one could be self-realised
by preserving the seed,
would not the eunuchs be so?

What of knowledge without love,
it drowns midway, says Kabir,
Ram is found by Rama's grace.

a-34

कहा भयौ तिलक गरैं जपमाला,
मरम न जाणैं मिलन गोपाला ।।
दिन प्रति पसू करै हरिहाई,
गरै काठ वाकी बांनि न जाई ।।
स्वांग सेत करणीं मनि काली,
कहा भयौ गलि माला घाली ।।
बिन ही प्रेम कहा भयौ रोयैं,
भीतरि मैल बाहरि कहा धोयैं ।।
गलगल स्वाद भगति नहीं धीर,
चीकन चंदवा कहै कबीर ।।

What of a tilak or rosary?
If unaware you are
of merging in Rama's glory.

What of log around the neck?
The beast runs wild
in spite of that.

What of sporting holy beads?
The dress is white
with dark mind and deeds.

What of tears sans love?
The dirt is within,
but you wash outside.

Piety without patience,
drowned in taste,
is a glossy canopy, says Kabir.

a-35

अब मोही राम भरोसा तेरा ।
और कौन का करो निहोरा ।।
जाके राम सरीखा साहब भाई ।
सो क्यूँ अनत पुकारन जाई ।।
जा सिरि तीनि लोक का भारा ।
सो क्यूँ न करे जन की प्रतिपारा ।।
कहै कबीर सेवौ बनवारी ।
सींचौ पेड़ पीवै सब डारि ।।

Now I rely on you, O Ram,
who else
should I beseech?

Why should he, O brother,
whose Lord is Ram,
beg others for help?

Why shouldn't he
who looks after three worlds,
care for His slave?

Says Kabir, serve Banavari,
water the tree.
it will reach the branches.

a-36

कथणी बदणी सब जंजाल ।
भाव भगति अरु रॉम निराल ।।
कथै बदै सुणै सब कोई ।
कथै न होई कीये होई ।।
कूड़ी करणी रॉम न पावै ।
साँच टिकै निज रूप दिखावै ।।
घट में अग्नि घर जल अवास ।
चेति बुझाइ कबीरदास ।।

Talks and debates
are of no avail,
let Ram and
love for him prevail.

Anybody can talk,
argue and listen,
actions bear fruit,
talks are barren.

You cannot find Ram,
if your deeds are false,
be fixed in Truth,
and He surely calls.

Within the vessel are
fire and water,
beware, says Kabir,
and douse the fire.

a-37

अरे भाई, दोइ कहाँ सो मोहि बतावौ ।
बिचिहि भरम का भेद लगावौ ।।
जोनि उपाइ रची द्वै धरनीं ।
दीन एक बीच भई करनीं ।।
रांम रहीम जपत सुधि गई ।
उनि माला उनि तसबी लई ।।
कहै कबीर चेतहु रे भौंदू ।
बोलनहारा तुरक न हिन्दू ।।

Tell me, O brother,
where are the two?
Why foist the illusion
of two on the one?

He created one life,
did He create two earths?
Religion is one,
rituals divide in two.

Counting Ram-Rahim,
they went awry,
one said its mala,
the other swore its tasbi.

Beware, O dunce,
says Kabir.
the speaker within
is no Hindu, no Muslim.

a-38

लोका जांनि न भूलौ भाई ।
खालिक खलक खलक मैं खालिक, सब घट रह्यौ समाई ।।
अला एकै नूर उपनाया, ताकी कैसी निंदा ।
ता नूर थैं सब जग कीया, कौन भला कौन मंदा ।।
ता अला की गति नहीं जांनी, गुरि गुड़ दीया मींठा ।
कहै कबीर मैं पूरा पाया, सब घटि साहिब दीठा ।।

Folks, my brothers,
why do you err?

Creation in the Creator,
and Creator in the creation,
He vibrates in all the vessels.

Allah caused one Light,
with that sired the universe,
why slander that?

His ways are beyond us,
Guru illumined, says Kabir,
and I saw my Lord in all.

a-39

भूली मालिनी, हे गोब्यंद जागतौ जगदेव ।
तूं करै किसकी सेव ।।
भूली मालनि पाती तोड़ै, पाती पाती जीव ।
जा मूरति कौं पाती तोड़ै, सो मूरति नर जीव ।।
टांचणहारै टांचिया, दै छाती ऊपरि पाव ।
जे तूं मूरति सकल है, तौ घड़णहारे कौ खाव ।।
लाडू लावण लापसी, पूजा चढ़ै अपार ।
पूजि पुजारा ले गया, दे मूरति कै मुहिं छार ।।
पाती ब्रह्मा पुहपै बिष्णु, फूल फल महादेव ।
तीनि देवौं एक मूरति, करै किसकी सेव ।।
एक न भूला दोइ न भूला, भूला सब संसारा ।
एक न भूला दास कबीरा, जाकै रांम अधारा ।।

O beguiled flower girl,
whom do you serve ?
Govinda is awake and alive.

O beguiled flower girl,
each leaf you pluck is alive,
though lifeless is the idol,
to which you offer them.

Planting his foot on the idol,
the sculptor sculpted it,
if the idol is Immutable,
let it ingest the sculptor first.

The food offered to the idol
is carried away by the priest,
the idol is left behind
with ashes in its mouth.

With Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh,
in leaves, fruit and flowers,
all manifesting one Truth,
whom do you serve, O girl?

Beguiled are not, one or two,
the whole world is beguiled,
rooted in Ram is Das Kabir.
hence he is not beguiled.

a-40

जो पैं बीज रूप भगवाना,
तौ पंडित का कथिसि गियाना ।
नहीं तन नहीं मन नहीं अहंकारा,
नहीं सत रज तम तीनि प्रकारा ।
विष अमृत फल फलै अनेक,
वेद रू बोधक हैं तरू एक ।
कहै कबीर इहै मन मानां,
कहिधूँ छूट कवन उरझाना ।

If God is the seed
of all the forms,
then, what is left
for the pandita to tell?

No body, no mind,
no ego has He,
sata, raja, tama,
none of the three;

poison and nectar
flower on the same tree,
all the scriptures say
there is just one Tree.

To this, says Kabir,
my mind agrees,
how does it matter,
if I am bound or free?

a-41

पांडे कौंन कुमति तोहि लागी ।
तूं रांम न जपहि अभागी ।।
वेद पुरान पढ़त अस पाँडे, खर चंदन जैसैं भारा ।
रांम नांम तत समझत नाँही, अंति पड़ै मुखि छारा ।।
बेद पढ़यां का यहु फल पांडे, सब घटि देखैं रांमां ।
जन्म मरन थैं तौ तूं छूटै, सुफल हूँहि सब कांमां ।।
जीव बधत अरु धरम कहत हौ, अधरम कहाँ है भाई ।
आपन तौ मुनिजन ह्वै बैठे, का सनि कहौं कसाई ।।
नारद कहै व्यास यौं भाषै, सुखदेव पूछौ जाई ।
कहै कबीर कुमति तब छूटै, जे रहौ रांम ल्यौ लाई ।।

Pandey, what plagues you?
O ill-fated, why don't you
meditate on Ram?

You toil with Veda-Puran
like a mule
with a load of sandal,

blind to the vital secret
of Rama's name,
at the end, you bite the dust.

Ved and Puran
should make you see
Ram alone in all,

and freeing you
from the life-death cycle,
should make you whole.

But You, O Pandey, kill animals
and call it a virtue,
pray, then what is vice?

You claim to be a saint,
pray, then,
who is a butcher?

Vice drops, says Kabir,
if you live
engrossed in Rama.

a-42

राम राइ तेरी गति जाँणी न जाई ।
जो जस करिहै सो तस पइहै, राजा राँम नियाई ।।
जैसी कहै करै जो तैसी, तो तिरत न लागै वारा ।
कहता कहि गया सुनता सुणी गया, करणीं कठिन अपारा ।।
सुरही तिण चरि अमृत सरवै, लेर भंवगहि पाई ।
अनेक जतन करि निग्रह कीजै, विषै विकार न जाई ।।
संत करै असंत की संगति, तासूँ कहा बसाई ।
कहै कबीर ताके भ्रम छूटै, जे रहे रॉम ल्यौ लाई ।।

O Ram, mysterious are your ways,
though your law says,
one reaps what one sows.

If one acts as one says,
finds freedom in no time,
but easier said or heard
than doing what one says.

Cow takes grass, gives milk,
but snake spews poison,
nature asserts itself,
in spite of self-restraint.

Saints may mix with sinners,
what power do they have?
He alone is above illusions,
who is immersed in Ram, says Kabir.

a-43

सुनता नही धुन की खबर, अनहद का बाजा बाजता ।
रस मंद मंदिर बाजता, बाहर सुने तो क्या हुआ ।
इक प्रेम-रस चाखा नही, अमली हुआ तो क्या हुआ ।।
काज़ी किताबें खोजता, करता नसीहत और को ।
महरम नहीं उस हाल से, काज़ी हुआ तो क्या हुआ ।
जोगी दिगंबर सेवड़ा, कपड़ा रंगे रंग लाल से ।
वाकिफ नही उस रंग से, कपड़ा रंगे से क्या हुआ ।।
मंदिर-झरोखा-रावटी, गुल चमन में रहते सदा ।
कहते कबीरा हैं सही, हर दम में साहिब रम रहा ।।

What of the fine tunes
if you cannot hear
the Unstruck-drum?

What of the music outside,
if you never heard
the music played inside?

What of an epicure,
who has never relished
the wine of love?

What of a Quazi
who has not realised
the blissful-state?

What of a Quazi
who masters books
to master others?

What of wearing ochre,
if the mind
is not yet ochre?

What if I am in
a temple or terrace,
in garden or at home,

I know, says Kabir,
my Lord alone vibrates
in all the breaths.

a-44

मन ना रँगाये रँगाये जोगी कपड़ा ।
आसन मारि मंदिर में बैठे,
ब्रह्म-छाँड़ि पूजन लागे पथरा ।।
कनवा फड़ाय जटवा बढ़ौले,
दाढ़ी बढ़ाय जोगी होई गैले बकरा ।
जंगल जाय जोगी धुनिया रमौले,
काम जराय जोगी होय गैले हिजरा ।।
मथवा मुँड़ा जोगी कपड़ा रँगौले,
गीता बाँच के होय गैले लबरा ।
कहहिं कबीर सुनो भाई साधो,
जम दरवजवा बाँधल जैबे पकड़ा ।।

Jogi colours the cloak,
but colours not the mind.

Sitting in a temple,
jogi worships a stone,
he leáves God outside.

Growing beard and hair
jogi tears ears,
he looks like a goat.

Sitting in smoke
jogi burns off lust,
he turns a eunuch.

Shaving his head,
jogi preaches from Gita,
he becomes a babbler.

Says Kabir, listen O saints,
in chains you'll go
to the house of death.

a-45

रे मन धीरज काहे न धरै ।
पसु-पंछी जीव कीट-पतंगा, सब की सुद्ध करै ।
गर्भ-बास में खबर लेतु है, बाहर क्यों बिसरै ।
मन तू हसन से साहेब के, भटकत काहे फिरै ।
प्रीतम छाँड़ और को धारै, कारज इक न सरै ।

O mind, why not be serene?
He takes care of all,
be it beast, bird, insect, man.

How can he who nursed you
inside your mother's womb,
fail to think of you outside?

You have a lovely Lord,
yet you loiter around
just like an orphan?

Turning your back to the Lord,
you long for others, says Kabir,
hence fail to realise your wish.

a-46

अवधू, माया तजी न जाई ।
गिरह तज के बस्तर बाँधा, बस्तर तज के फेरी ।
लड़िका तजि के चेला कीन्हा, तहुँमति माया घेरी ।।
जैसे बेल बाग में अरुझी मांहि रही अरुझाई ।
छोरे से वह छूटे नाहीं कोटिन करै उपाई ।।
काम तजे तें क्रोध न जाई, क्रोध तजे तें लोभा ।
लोभ तजे अहँकार न जाई, मान-बढ़ाई सोभा ।।
मन बैरागी माया त्यागी, शब्द में सुरत समाई ।
कहै कबीर सुनो भाई साधो, यह गम बिरले पाई ।।

Avadhoo, its tough
to drop Maya.

Leaving the house,
I wore a cloak,
shook it off to be a jogi.

Forsook my son,
but took a disciple,
Maya still surrounds me;

as a creeper clings
to a garden-wall,
so is Maya's grip on me.

Try I may
however hard,
too tough to drop Maya;

subdued desires,
but anger arose, and
greed on curbing anger;

Conquered greed,
but pride prevailed,
as praise, power, prestige.

Only ascetic mind
knows no Maya
and merges in the Word.

But rare are people,
says Kabir,
who tread this path rare.

a-47

अरे दिल,
प्रेमनगर का अंत न पाया, ज्यों आया त्यों जावैगा ।
सुन मेरे साजन सुन मेरे मीता, या जीवन में क्या क्या बीता ।।
सिर पाहन को बोझा लीता, आगे कौन छुड़ावैगा ।
परली पार मेरा मीता खड़िया, उस मिलने का ध्यान न धरिया ।
टूटी नाव उपर जो बैठा, गाफिल गोता खावेगा ।।
दास कबीर कहै समुझाई, अंतकाल तेरा कौन सहाई ।
चला अकेला संग न कोई, किया आपना पावैगा ।।

O mind, you know not yet
the secret of love,
you'll whirl on the wheel again.

Listen, my friend, my darling.
what haven't you
gone through in this life?

Why carry a weight on head?
At the other end,
who will come to your aid?

Far away is the Friend,
you never devised
a way to meet Him ever?

Sailing in a broken-barge,
O beguiled-self,
you will surely drown.

Das Kabir explains to you,
as the curtain falls,
none will stand by your side.

Suffering for what you do,
alone you will go,
with none to accompany you.

a-48

हमारे राम रहीम करीमा केसो, अहल रांम रति सोई ।
इनके काज़ी मुलां पीर पैकंबर, रोजा पछिम निवाला ।
इनके पूरब दिसा देव दिज पूजा, ग्यारसि गंग दिवाजा ।।
तुरक मसीति देहुरै हिंदु, दहूठा राम खुदाई ।
जयां मसीति देहुरा नांही, तहाँ काकी ठकुराई ।।
हिंदू तुरक दोऊ रह तूटी, फूटी अरु कनराई ।
अरध उरध दसहूं दिस जित तित, पूपी रह्या समाई ।।
कहै कबीर दास कबीरा अपनी रहि चल भाई ।
हिंदू तुरक का करता एकै, ता गति लखी न जाई ।।

Ram-Rahim, Keshav-Karim,
all are the names of my Allah.

One reveres Mullah, Quazi, Pir,
observes fast and
prays facing the west.

For the other holy-days and dips
in the Ganges, he turns
to the east, to worship gods.

For Hindus in the temple,
for Muslims in the mosque,
God lives and rules only there.

Pray, where there is
no mosque, no temple,
who is the Lord over there?

Both are beguiled
their ways are fallacious,
and both lead to friction.

East or west, north or south,
all the ten directions
vibrate with the sound of Ram.

Says Kabir, I worship saints,
my brothers dear,
listen to the voice of your soul.

Master of both is the same,
be he Hindu or Muslim,
and nobody knows his ways.

a-49

एक सुहागन जगत पियारी, सकल जीव जंत की नारी ।
खसम मरै वा नारी न रोवै, उस रखवाला औरे होवै ।।
रखवाले का होई विनास, उतहि नरक इत भोग विलास ।
सुहागिन गलि सोहै हार, संतनि बिख बिलसै संसार ।
पीछै लागि फिरै पचिहारी, सत की ठठकी फिरै विचारी ।
संत भजै वा पाछी पड़ै, गुरू के सबदूं मारयो डरै ।
साषत के यहु प्यंड परांइनि, हंमारी दृष्टि परै जैसे डांइनि ।
अब हम इसका पाया भेद, होइ कृपाल मिले गुरदेव ।
कहै कबीर इब बाहरि परी, संसारा के अंचल टिरी ।।

A bride, beloved of all,
she is wifely to
all the creatures of the world.

If her man dies, she mourns not,
but weds another at once,
him also she drives to hell,
drowning in lust.

Bejeweled, bedecked,
she snares the world,
However, saints are beyond her,
she follows them inspite of fear.

Stung by their apathy,
she shadows them in dread,
but takes to heels,
on hearing Guru's Word.

As dear as life to a Shakta,
a witch she is for Ram lovers,
by Sataguru's grace
now I know her true nature.

So away from me she has fallen,
declares Kabir,
in the lap of the worldly folks.

YEARNING

y-1

गोव्यंदे तुम्ह थैं डरपौं भारी ।
सरणाई आयौ क्यूँ गहिये, यह कौन बात तुम्हारी ।।
धूप -दाझतैं छाँह तकाई, मति तरवर सच पाऊँ ।
तरवर माहैं ज्वाला निकसै, तौ क्या लेइ बुझाऊँ ।।
जे बन जलै तो जलकूँ धावै, मति जल सीतल होई ।
जल ही माँहि अगिनि जे निकसै, और न दूजा कोई ।।
तारण तिरण तिरण तू तारण, और न दूजा जानौ ।
कहै कबीर सरनाई आयौ, आंन देव नहिं मानौ ।।

Govinde,
I am highly scared of you,
you say no even to him
who seeks refuge in you?

If the sun scorches,
one seeks the shade of a tree,
but where to go
if heat emits from the tree?

If the forest is on fire,
one seeks water,
but where to go
if water also spews fire?

You are the saviour, Govinde,
I know none other than you,
if you rebuff me, says Kabir,
where should I go?

y-2

हरि जननी मैं बालक तोरा,
काहे न औगुण बकसहु मेरा ।।
सुत अपराध करै दिन केते,
जननी के चित रहैं न तेते ।।
कर गहि केस करे जौ घाता,
तऊ न हेत उतारै माता ।।
कहै कबीर एक बुधि बिचारी,
बालक दुखी दुखी महतारी ।।

Mother Hari, I am your son,
why don't you
acquit me of my sins?

Son so often blunders,
but nothing lingers
in the heart of the mother.

Even if he hurts her,
pulling by her hair,
mother's love is not less.

Of one thing Kabir is sure,
if the child is upset,
mother is upset even more.

y-3

को बीनै प्रेम लागौ, री मांई को बीनैं ।
रांम रसांइण मातै, री मांई को बीनैं ।।
पाई पाई तूं पुतिहाई, पाई की तुरिया बेचि खाई ।
री मांई को बीनैं ।।
ऐसे पाई पर बिथुराई, त्यूं रस आंनि बनायौ ।
री माई को बीनैं ।।
नाचै तांनां नाचैं बांनां नाचै कूच पुराना ।
री माई को बीनैं ।।
करगहि बैठि कबीरा नाचै, चुहै काटया तानां ।
री माई को बीनैं ।।

I am smitten by love,
now who will weave, O mother?
I am drunk on Rama-wine,
now who will weave, O mother?

You thought I knew
how to clean the yarn,
but I sold away even the brush,
now who will weave, O mother?

You spread the yarn for cleaning,
but I went and spilled
Rama-wine over it,
now who will weave, O mother?

The warp is dancing,
the weft is dancing,
the old brush too is dancing,
now who will weave, O mother?

Kabir is dancing
at the loom, while
rat nibbles the yarn,
now who will weave, O mother?

y-4

जन की पीर हो राजा रांम भल जाँनैं ।
कहूँ काहि को माँनैं ।।
नैन का दुख बैन जाँनैं, बैन का दुख श्रवनाँ ।
प्यंड का दुख प्रांन जाँनैं, प्रांन का दु:ख मरनाँ ।।
आस का दु:ख प्यास जाँनैं, प्यास का दु:ख नीर ।
भगति का दु:ख रांम जाँनैं, कहै दास कबीर ।

Lord Ram knows my woes.
Whom else to tell, and
who will believe?

As tongue is aware of
the agony of eyes,
ears of the agony of tongue;

as life is aware of
the pains of body,
death of the pains of life;

as thirst is aware of
the pangs of desire,
water of the pangs of thirst;

Lord Rama is aware of
the woes of his slave,
so says Das Kabir.

y-5

अजहूँ बीच कैसे दरसन तोरा ।
बिन दरसन मन मानैं क्यूँ मोरा ।।
हमहि कुसेवग क्या तुम्हहि अजांनां ।
दुह मैं दोस कहौ किन राँमां ।।
तुम्ह कहियत त्रिभवनपति राजा ।
मनवांछित सब पुरवन काजा ।।
कहै कबीर हरि दरस दिखावौ ।
हमहि बुलावौ कै तुम्ह चलि आवौ ।।

How to have your darshan,
as yet, I am halfway?
But without your darshan,
how can I be happy?

Tell me please, O Ram,
who of us has a blot?
Am I a bad servant,
or you a careless Lord?

O Lord of three worlds,
you can fulfill all your desires,
call me or come yourself.
but give your darshan to Kabir.

y-6

सॉंई मेरे साजि दई एक डोली,
हस्त लोक अरु मैं तैं बोली ।।
इक झंझर सम सूत खटोला,
त्रिस्ना बाव चहुँ दिसि डोला ।।
पॉंच कहार का भरम न जाना,
एकै कह्या एक नहीं माना ।।
भूमर घाम उहार न छावा,
नैंहर जात बहुत दुख पावा ।।
कहै कबीर बर बहु दुख सहिये,
राम प्रीति करि संगही रहिये ।।

I roam about the world
in a palanquin,
my Lord arranged for me.

A flimsy cot of cotton,
it swings around
with the wind of desires.

I know not the nature
of its five carriers,
none obeys the One.

Minus a blind, on the hot sand,
I suffered a lot, O Lord,
on the way to father's home.

Better suffer still more,
says Kabir, but
live close to Ram in love.

y-7

जियरा मेरा फिरै उदास ।
राम बिन निकसि न जाई साँस, अजहुँ कौन आस ।।
जहाँ जहाँ जाऊँ रँम मिलावै न कोई, कहै संतो कैसे जीवन होई ।।
जरै सरीर यहु तन कोई न बुझावै, अनल दहै निस नींद न आवैं ।।
चंदन घसि घसि अंग लगाऊँ, रँम बिनाँ दारुन दुख पाँऊ ।।
सतसंगति मति मनकरि धीरा, सहज जाँनि रँमहि भजै कबीरा ।।

Nobody knows,
how lonely is my soul!

Away from Ram,
I can neither live
nor breathe my last,
though yet no hope have I.

Tell me, O saints,
how to live,
when nobody
takes me to Him?

Separation sears me,
but nobody
douses the fire,
sleep has deserted me.

The paste of sandal
fails to relieve,
my heart is aching
for my dear Ram.

Calming the mind
in the company of saints,
I worship Ram, says Kabir,
He is my natural-self.

y-8

विरहिनी फिरै है नाथ अधीरा ।
उपजि बिनाँ कछु समझि न परई, बाँझ न जानै पीरा ।।
या बड़ बिथा सोई भल जाँने, राँम बिरह सर मारी ।
कै सो जाँने जिनि यहु लाई, कै जिनि चोट सहारी ।।
सँग की बिछुरी मिलन न पावै, सोच करै अरु काहै ।
जतन करै अरु जुगति बिचारै, रटै राँम कूँ चाहै ।।
दीन भई बूझै सखियन कौ, कोई मोही राम मिलावै ।
दास कबीर मीन ज्यूँ तलपै, मिलै भलै सचु पावै ।।

Acute is the anguish
of the soul
cut off from Ram,

inconceivable, till born,
can a barren-woman
conceive of labour-pain?

Only he who is struck
by the arrow of Ram
knows how it pricks,

say, two know the pain.
He who shoots the arrow
or he who is shot at.

Away from Love,
she pines for him,
broods on it and wails;

makes all the plans
to reach Him,
and chants His name.

Woebegone, begs friends
if one can devise
her union with Ram,

she will writhe in pain
like a fish, says Kabir,
till she is united with Ram.

y-9

राम कहो न अजहूँ केते दिनां ।
जब ह्वैहै प्रांन प्रभू तुम्ह लीनां ।।
भौ भ्रमत अनेक जनम गया ।
तुम्ह दरसन गोव्यंद छिन न भया ।।
भ्रमि भूलि परयौ भव-सागरा ।
कछु न बसाइ बसोधरा ।।
कहै कबीर दुखभंजना ।
करौ दया दुरतनिकंदना ।।

O Ram, tell me please,
how many days still
before I merge
in you, my Lord?

Roving through the world,
so many lives are gone,
but not for a moment
had your darshan, O Lord.

Beguiled, I slipped
in the life-death-ocean,
O Lord Almighty,
I have no power of mine.

O Sorrow-Remover,
O Sin-Destroyer,
begs Kabir,
shower your mercy on me.

y-10

राम बिन तन की ताप न जाई ।
जल में अगनि उठी अधिकाई ।।
तुम्ह जलनिधि मैं जलकर मीनां ।
जल में रहौं जलहिं बिन खीनां ।।
तुम्ह प्यंजरा मैं सुवनां तोरा ।
दरसन देहु भाग बड़ मोरा ।।
तुम्ह सतगुरु मैं नौतम चेला ।
कहै कबीर रांम रमूं अकेला ।।

Fire in the water
has flared up so high,
without you, O Ram
none can douse the heat.

You are the ocean,
I'm your fish, O Ram,
I live in water,
yet pine for water!

You are the cage,
I am your parrot,
Bless me, O Ram,
with your darshan.

You are Sataguru,
I am a new disciple,
but I long to live
in you alone, O Ram.

y-11

बाल्हा आव हमारे ग्रेह र । तुम्ह बिन दुखिया देह रे ।।
सब को कहै तुम्हारी नारी, मोकौं इहै अंदेह रे ।
एकमेक ह्वै सेज न सोवै, तब लग कैसा नेह रे ।।
आंन न भावै नींद न आवै, ग्रिह बन धरै न धीर रे ।
ज्यूं कामी को काम पियारा, ज्यूं प्यासे को नीर रे ।।
है कोई ऐसा परउपकारी, हरि सूं कहै सुनाइ रे ।
ऐसे हाल कबीर भये हैं, बिन देखे जीव जाइ रे ।।

O darling,
come home to me,
away from you,
life is a tale of misery.

All call me your wife,
but I have my qualms?
To what avail is love
unless we are one?

Food repels me,
sleep is miles away,
no peace have I.
in or out of the house.

You are dear to me
as lust is to
a lustful-man, and
water to a thirsty-soul.

Is there some one
kind enough
to carry my misery
to my dear Hari?

So wretched am I,
says Kabir,
I may die,
if I don't see Hari.

y-12

रांम बाँन अन्याले तीर ।
जाहि लागे सो जाँनै पीर ।।
तन मन खोजौं चोट न पाँउँ ।
ओषद मूली कहाँ घरि लाँऊँ ।।
एक ही रूप दीसै सब नारी ।
नाँ जानौं को पियहि पियारी ।।
कहै कबीर जा मस्तिक भाग ।
नाँ जाँनूँ काहु देई सुहाग ।।

So sharp is Rama-arrow,
he whom it pierces,
knows the pain.

Search body-mind,
but the wound is unfound,
where to rub the herbal-paste?

All the females look alike,
I wonder,
whom the Lord will woo?

Who is that blessed soul,
wonders Kabir,
whom the Lord will marry.

y-13

तलफै बिन बालम मोर जिया ।
दिन नहीं चैन रात नहीं निंदिया, तलफ तलफ के भोर किया ।।
तन-मन मोर रहँट-अस डोलै, सुन सेज पर जनम छिया ।
नैन थकित भये पंथ न सूझै, साँई बेदरदी सुध न लिया ।।
कहत कबीर सुनो भाई साधो, हरो पीर दुख जोर किया ।।

My heart aches
for my Love.

Restless by day,
sleepless by night,
I roll in agony,
till the break of day.

My mind and body
like Persian-wheel turn,
my life withers
on the bed-barren.

Eyes are weary,
watching His way,
yet the heartless lover
never cared to come.

Listen, saint-brothers,
pleads Kabir,
the pain has shot up,
abolish it at once.

y-14

तुम्ह बिन रांम कवन सौं कहिये । लागी चोट बहुत दुख सहिये ।।
बैंध्यो जीव बिरह के भालै, राति दिवस मेरे उर सालै ।।
को जानैं मेरे तन की पीरा, सतगुरु सबद बहि गयौ सरीरा ।।
तुम्ह से बैद न हम से रोगी, उपजी बिथा कैसे जीवै वियोगी ।।
निस बासुर मोहि चितवत जाई, अजहूँ न आइ मिले रांम राई ।।
कहत कबीर हमकौं दुख भारी, बिन दरसन क्यूँ जीवहि मुरारी ।।

Whom to show but you,
this harrowing
wound of mine, O Ram?

Parting has cut
my heart,
it throbs with pain
day and night.

My body is dissolved,
by Guru's Word,
who knows
how it hurts?

Insufferable,
the pain sears,
no doctor like you,
no patient like me.

All the time
I look for you,
why don't you
deign to come, O Ram?

My misery is grim,
says Kabir,
why should I live
without your darshan?

y-15

ऐसा औसर बहुरि न आवै,
रांम मिलै पूरा जन पावै ।।
जनम अनेक गया अरु आया,
की बेगारि न भाड़ा पाया ।।
भेष अनेक एकधूं कैसा,
नाना रूप धरै नट जैसा ।।
दांन एक माँगों कवलाकंत,
कबीर के दुख हरन अनंत ।।

Such a rare blessing!
To meet Ram
and find the Bliss,
will not repeat itself.

So many lives
just passed away,
I always laboured,
but found no wages.

What of one,
so many forms I had,
like a juggler
various roles I played.

I beg for a favour now,
prays Kabir,
please put an end
to my endless woes.

y-16

हरि मेरा पीव मांई, हरि मेरा पीव ।
हरि बिन रहि न सके मेरा जीव ।।
हरि मेरा पीव मैं हरि की बहुरिया ।
राम बड़े मैं छुटक लहुरिया ।।
किया स्यंगार मिलन के ताई ।
काहै न मिलौ राजा राम गुसांई ।।
अब की बेर मिलन जो पाऊँ ।
कहै कबीर भौ जलि नहिं आऊँ ।।

O friend,
Hari is my Love,
away from Hari,
my soul cannot live.

I am Hari's beloved,
He is my all,
what if He is great,
and I am small?

I dressed myself
for you, my Hari,
why don't you
come to me, Hari?

If now I am blessed
with a meeting, says Kabir,
I won't return
to this ocean again.

y-17

माधौ दारन दुख सह्यौ न जाइ ।
मेरी चपल बुधि तातैं कहा बसाइ ।।
तन मन भीतरि बसैं मदन चोर, जिनि ग्यांन रतन हरि लीन्ह मोर ।
मैं अनाथ प्रभू कहूँ काहि, अनेक बिगूचे मैं को आहि ।।
सनक सनंदन सिव सुकादि, आपण कवलापति भये ब्रहादि ।
जोगी जंगम जती जटाधार, अपने औसर सब गये हैं हार ।।
कहै कबीर रहु संग साथ, अभिअंतरि हरि सूं कही बात ।
मन ग्यांन जांनि कैं करि बिचार, रांम रमत भौ तिरिबौ पार ।।

Madho, I cannot bear
this awful-grief,
it is too severe
for my fickle-mind.

Lust that lives
in body-mind,
has relieved me of
my pearl of wisdom.

Lord, I'm an orphan,
who will hear me?
Many are duped,
what am I?

Seers and gods,
Suka-Siva, and Vishnu,
were swept off
their feet.

Yogis, hermits
and ascetics,
with matted locks,
found it hard to resist.

Says Kabir, be close
in love with Hari,
and tell him
all your woes.

In the light
of knowledge,
it dawned on me,
Ram can set me free.

y-18

अब मोहि ले चल नणद के बीर, अपनैं देसा ।
इन पंचिनी मिलि लूटी हूँ, कुसंग आहि बदेसा ।।
गंग तीर मोरी खेती बारी, जमुन तीर खरिहांनां ।
सातौ बिरही मेरे नीपजैं, पंचो मोर किसांनां ।।
कहै कबीर यह कथा अकथ है, कहताँ कहि न जाई ।
सहज भाई जिहिं ऊपजै, ते रमि रहे समाई ।।

My sister-in-laws' brother,
now take me home,
these five together
have ruined me,
their evil alliance
reigns here.

I have my farm
by the Ganges' shore,
by the Jamuna I have a store
seven saplings
I have grown,
and five are now my farmers.

Untellable is this tale,
try I may, says Kabir,
but cannot tell,
for he to whom
He happens, brother,
lives lost in Him forever.

y-19

अब न बसूँ इह गाँव गुसाँई । तेरे नेवगी खरे सयाँने हो राँम ।।
नगर एक तहाँ जीवधर महता, बसै जु पंच किसानाँ ।
नैनूँ नकटूँ श्रवनूँ रसनूँ, इंद्री कहया न मानै हो राँम ।।
गाँई को ठाकुर खेत कू नेपै, काइथ खरच न पारै ।
जोरि जेवरि खेति पसारै, सब मिलि मोकौं मारै हो राँम ।।
ख्रोटो महतो बिकट बलाही, सिर कसदम का पारै ।
बुरो दिवांन दादि नहि लागै, इक बाँधै इक मारै हो राँम ।।
धरमराइ जब लेखा मांग्या, बाकी निकसी भारी ।
पाँच किसानाँ भाजि गये हैं, जीवधर बाँध्यौं पारी हो राँम ।।
कहै कबीर सुनहु रे संतौ, हरि भजि बाँधौ भेरा ।
अब की बेर बकसि बंदे कौं, सब खत करौ नबेरा ।।

My Lord,
I will live here no more,
your officers are
too clever, O Ram!

In a town here,
I set up a home,
With farmers five,
Eyes, Ears, Nose,
Tongue and Skin,
none of them obeys me, O Ram!

The landlord eyes my field,
his envoy quotes
too high a price,
joining the ropes,
they measure the field,

all of them harass me, O Ram!
The chief is malicious,
inspires fear
in every heart,
justice is denied
in his court,
one holds, the other beats, O Ram!

Verifying accounts,
the judge found,
I owe a huge amount,
five farmers
have run away,
I am caught in their lieu, O Ram!

Says Kabir, listen O saints,
launch the boat,
recalling Hari,
I promise to pay off
all the dues,
this time forgive me, O Ram!

y-20

बाबा करहु कृपा जन मारगि लावो, ज्यूँ भव बँधन षूटै ।
जुरा मरन दुख फेरि करंन सुख, जीव जनम थैं छूटै ।।
सतगुरु चरण लागि यौं बिनऊँ, जीवन कहाँ थैं पाई ।
जा कारनि हम उपजैं बिनसै, क्यूं न कहौ समझाई ।।
आसा-पास षंड नहीं पाड़ै, यौं मन सुंनि न लूटै ।
आपा पर आनंद न बूझै, बिन अनभै क्यूं छूटै ।।
कह्या न उपजैं उपज्या नहीं जाणै, भाव अभाव बिहूनां ।
उदै अस्त जहाँ मति बुधि नाँहीं, सहजि रांम ल्यौ लीनां ।।
ज्यूं बिंबहि प्रतिबिंब समांनां, उदकि कुंभ बिगरांनां ।
कहै कबीर जांनि भ्रम भागा, जीवहिं जीव समांनां ।।

My Father dear,
guide me home,
and free me from the serfdom
and lead from death
to deathlessness,
from gloom to bliss.

My Sataguru, I pray,
please illumine,
from where we get life?
Why are we born?
And where do we go
when life ends?

If longings linger
in the mind,
it fails to find the Bliss,
but how can it be free

without realising
the Bliss?

I am lost in a Bliss,
that occurs itself,
beyond existence,
non-existence or senses,
beyond mind-intellect,
or birth and death it is.

As the holder breaks
image in the real,
water in water merges,
the soul merges,
in the Over-soul, and
all illusions vanish, says Kabir.

y-21

निस-दिन खेलत रही सखियन संग,
मोहि बड़ा डर लागे ।
मोरे साहब की ऊँची अटरिया,
चढ़त में जियरा काँपे ।।
जो सुख चहै तो लज्जा त्यागे,
पिया से हिलमिल लागे ।
घूँघट खोल अंग भर भेंटे,
नैन आरती साजे ।।
कहै कबीर सुनो सखि मोरी,
प्रेम होय सो जाने ।
जिन प्रीतम की आस नही है
नाहक काजर पारे ।।

I happily played with friends,
but fear grips me now
as I near my Lord's house.

My heart trembles,
as I climb the steps,
they are too high for me.

Drop all the veils,
light the lamps of eyes,
be lost in the arms of Love.

Listen my friend,
if you love, then
you know it, says Kabir.

Why in vain put kohl,
in the eyes,
if you love not the Lord?

y-22

धीरौं मेरे मनवां तोहि धरि टागौं,
तैं तौ कीयौ मेरे खसम सूं षागौं ।
प्रेम की जेवरिया तेरे गलि बांधूं,
तहां लै जांउं जहां मेरे माधौ ।।
काया नगरी पैसि किया मै बासा,
हरि रस छांड़ि विषै रसि माता ।
कहै कबीर तन मन का ओरा,
भाव भगति हरि सूं गठजोरा ।।

O mind, wait and see,
I will punish thee,
you have duped my Lord.

Tying around your neck,
the rope of love,
I will take you to my Madho.

Moving into the body,
I left Rama-wine,
and on senses, I got drunk.

But my wish is now realised,
I am going home
says Kabir, to live in Hari.

UNION

u-1

राम मोहि तारि कहाँ लै जैहो ।
सो बैकुंठ कहौ धूं कैसा, करि पसाव मोहि दैहो ।
जो मेरे जीव दोइ जानत हौ, तो मोहि मुकुत बताओ ।
एकमेक रमि रह्या सबनि में, तो काहे भरमावौ ।
तारण तिरण जबै लग कहियै, जब लग तत न जांना ।
एक रांम देख्या सबहिन में, कहै कबीर मन मांना ।

Setting me free, O Ram,
where will you take me?
Where is the heaven,
that you will give me?

Lead me to redemption
if I am another,
but why mislead,
when there is none other?

Unaware of the truth,
I saw the saved and the saviour,
but now I see, says Kabir,
one Ram everywhere.

u-2

हमारे गुरु दीन्ही अजब जरी ।
कहा कहौ कछु कहत न आवै, अंम्रित रसन भरी ।।
याहि ते मोहि प्यारी लागी, लै के गुपुत धरी ।
पांचौ नाग पचीसौ नांगिन, सूंधत तुरत मरी ।।
डांइनि एक सकल जग खायौ, सो भी देखि डरी ।
कहै कबीर भया घट निरमल, सकल वियाधि टरी ।।

My Guru gave me
a wonderful herb.

Imbued with ambrosia,
it defies
all words of praise.

So precious it is for me,
I have kept it
close to my self.

The five cobras with
five mates each,
die of its mere whiff.

The witch who scares
the whole world,
scurries if she sees it.

The vessel is purged,
says Kabir,
all the woes are averted.

u-3

कौन मरै कौन जनमै आई, सरग नरक कौनै गति पाई ।।
पंचतत अविगत थै उतपनां, एकै किया निवासा ।
बिछुरे तत फिरि सहज समांनां, रेख रही नही आसा ।।
जल में कुंभ कुंभ में जल है, बाहर भीतर पानी ।
फूटा कुंभ जल जलहि समांनां, यही तथ कथौ गियानी ।।
आदै गगनाँ अंतै गगनाँ, मधै गगनाँ भाई ।
कहै कबीर करम किस लागै, झूठी संक उपाई ।।

Who it is that dies?
And who is born here?
Who goes to hell or heaven?

Born it is,
when the One abides
in five existent elements.

Gone for ever,
leaving no trace behind,
when the One merges back in Void.

Vessel in water,
and water in the vessel,
water within and without;

the vessel breaks,
the waters re-merge,
that is the crux, say devout.

With Void in the beginning,
Void at the end
and Void in between, brother,

who bears the fruit of actions?
Such notions, says Kabir,
Are pieces of fiction.

u-4

मन रे जागत रहिये भाई ।
गाफिल होई बसत मति खोवै, चोर मुसै घर जाई ।।
षट चक्र की कनक कोठड़ी, बस्त भाव है सोई ।
ताला कूँची कुलफ के लागे, उघड़त बार न होई ।।
पांच पहरवा सोइ गये हैं, बसतै जागण लागी ।
जरा मरण व्यापै कुछ नांही, गगन मंडल लौ लागी ।।
करत बिचार मनहीं मन उपजी, नाँ कहीं गया न आया ।
कहै कबीर संसा सब छूटा, रांम रतन धन पाया ।।

O Mind, my brother,
wake up and beware!
Lest you lose the jewel,
the thief is on the prowl.

In the golden-cell
remote lies the jewel
under lock and key, yet,
it can easily be evoked.

When five guards fell asleep,
the jewel began to glow,
mind merged in the Void,
then death and decay were out.

When mind moved inwards,
it happened by itself, says Kabir,
gone were all waverings,
and I found the jewel of Ram.

u-5

कबीरा बिगरया राम दुहाई,
तुम्ह जिनि बिगरौ मेरे भाई ।
चंदन के ढिंग बिरष जु भैला,
बिगरि बिगरि सो चंदन ह्वैला ।
पारस कौं जे लोह छिवैंगा,
बिगरि बिगरि सो कंचन ह्वैला ।।
गंगा मैं जे नीर मिलैगा,
बिगरि बिगरि गंगोदिक ह्वैला ।
कहै कबीर जे रांम कहैंला,
बिगरि बिगरि सो रांमहि ह्वैला ।।

Kabir is spoiled
by devotion for Ram,
you save your soul, my brother.

Can't help but spoil
the tree that's close
to the sandal-tree,
at the end, it reeks of sandal.

Can't help but spoil
the iron-piece that touches
the philosopher's stone,
at the end, it turns into gold.

Can't help but spoil
the water that falls
into the Ganges,
at the end, its Ganges-water.

Can't help but spoil him
who meditates on Ram,
at the end, says Kabir,
he surely becomes Ram.

u-6

इब न रहूँ माटी के घर में,
इब मैं जाइ रहूँ मिलि हरि मैं ।।
छिनहर घर अरु झिरहर टाटी,
घन गरजत कंपै मेरी छाती ।।
दसवैं द्वारि लागि गई तारी,
दूरि गवन आवन भयौ भारी ।।
चहुँ दिसि बैठे चारि पहरिया,
जागत मुसि गये मोर नगरिया ।।
कहै कबीर सुनहु रे लोई,
भांनङ घड़ण संवारण सोई ।।

I will live no more
in the earthen-house,
I am going to live in Hari.

In the tumble-down house,
with flimsy shutters,
I tremble when clouds roar.

Engrossed in trance
at the tenth door,
I have gone too far to return.

Four sentries patrol all around,
yet, my house
has been looted, my Lord.

Listen, O Loi, says Kabir,
it is He who creates,
sustains and destroys as well.

u-7

झगरा एक नबेरो राम,
जे तुम्ह अपनैं जन सूं कांम ।।
ब्रह्म बड़ा कि जिनि रु उपाया ।
बेद बड़ा कि जहाँ थैं आया ।।
यह मन बड़ा कि जहाँ मन मानैं ।
रांम बड़ा कि रांमहि जानैं ।
कहै कबीर हूँ खरा उदास ।
तीरथ बड़े कि हरि के दास ।।

Settle a dispute, O Ram,
if you love your slave.

Is Brahma bigger or
he who created Brahma?
Is the Veda bigger or
where it came from?

Is mind bigger or
what it believes in?
Is Ram bigger or
he who knows Ram?

Kabir is highly upset
as he cannot decipher
is a shrine is bigger or
the heart of Hari's lover?

u-8

परोसनि माँगै कंत हमारा,
पीव क्यूँ बौरी मिलहि उधारा ।।
मासा माँगै रती न देऊँ,
घटे मेरा प्रेम तौ कासनि लेऊँ ।
राखि परोसनि लरिका मोर,
जो कछु पाँऊ सु आधा तोर ।।
बन-बन ढूँढौं नैन भरि जोऊँ,
पीव न मिलै तौ बिलखि करि रोऊँ ।
कहै कबीर यहु सहज हमारा,
बिरली सुहागनि कंत पियारा ।।

Neighbour dear,
want to hire my husband!
O fool, how can you ?

What of a gram of love!
won't give even a grain,
how will I recover my loss?

Neighbour, you take my son,
share half of all I earn,
but not Him.

Looking for him
I wander through woods,
weep and wait, not finding him.

My own self is He, says Kabir,
but rare are wives
who love their husbands.

u-9

मैं गुलाम मोहि बेचि गुसांई,
तन-मन-धन मेरा राम जी के तांई ।
आंनि कबीरा हाटि उतारा,
सोई गाहक सोई बेचन हारा ।
बेचै राम तो राखै कौन,
राखै रांम तौ बेचै कौंन ।।
कहै कबीर मैं तन मन जारया,
साहिब अपना छिन न बिसारया ।।

I am a slave, master sells me,
all I am and all I have,
is for Ram alone.

He put me here in the market,
He is the seller and
He is the buyer as well.

If Ram retains who can sell?
Who can retain,
if Ram wishes to sell?

I forgot my body-mind, but
never for a moment
forgot my Lord, says Kabir.

u-10

दुलहनीं गावहु मंगलचार ।
हम घरि आए हो, राजा रांम भरतार ।।
तन रत करि मैं मन रत करिहूँ, पंचतत्त बराती ।
रांमदेव मोरैं पाँहुनैं आए, मैं जोबन मैं माती ।।
सरीर सरोवर बेदी करिहूँ, ब्रह्मा वेद उचार ।
रांमदेव संगि भाँवरि लैहूँ, धंनि धंनि भाग हमार ।।
सुर तेतीसूं कौतिग आये, मुनिवर सहस अठ्यासी ।
कहैं कबीर हम ब्याहि चले हैं, पुरुष एक अविनाशी ।।

O blessed brides,
sing welcome songs!
Ram comes home to wed me.

My body and mind,
I've given away in love,
and five have joined Him.

Lord Ramdeva has come
as my guest,
I am drunk on eternal youth.

Making an altar
of the body-pond,
as Brahma chants the hymns,

with my Lord Ramdeva,
I will go round the holy fire,
how very blessed I am!

Thirty-three crore gods
and hermits
eighty-eight thousand,

all have come to see, says Kabir,
the rare phenomenon:
my marrying an Immortal man!

u-11

अपनैं मैं रंगि आपनपो जानूँ ।
जिहि रंगि जांनि ताही कूं माँनूँ ।।
अभि अंतरि मन रंग समानां ।
लोग कहैं कबीर बौंरानां ।।
रंग न चीन्है मूरखि लोई ।
जिहि रंगि रंग रह्या सब कोई ।।
जे रंग कबहुँ न आवै न जाई ।
कहै कबीर तिहिं रह्या समाई ।।

My soul bears Immortal-hue,
I honour him
who knows this hue.

This hue has seeped
so deep inside,
people say Kabir is mad.

All are suffused
with this hue, but
know it not, how sad!

O Loi, Kabir is immersed
forever,
in this fast, immortal-hue.

u-12

बहुत दिनन थे मैं प्रीतम पाये ।
भाग बड़े घरि बैठे आये ।।
मंगलचार माँहि मन राखौं,
राम रसाँइण रसना चाखौं ।।
मंदिर मांहि भया उजियारा,
ले सूती अपना पीव पियारा ।।
मैं रनि रासी जे निधि पाई,
हमहिं कहा यहु तुमहि बड़ाई ।।
कहै कबीर मैं कछु न कीन्हा,
सखी सुहाग राँम मोहि दीन्हा ।।

How blessed I am!
I found my long-lost Love,
and He came on His own.

With mind engrossed
in the welcome-song,
I will relish the Rama-wine.

The temple is refulgent,
my Lord is with me,
I am going to sleep with Him.

The treasure I received
is a gift of Your grace,
not a prize that I deserved.

No efforts I put in, says Kabir,
Ram offered me
the bliss of married-life.

u-13

कहौ भइया अंबर कांसूं लागा ।
कोई जांणैगा जांननहार सभागा ।।
अंबरि दीसैं केता तारा ।
कौंन चतुर ऐसा चितरनहारा ।।
तुम्ह देखौ सो यहु नांही ।
यहु पद अगम अगोचर मांही ।।
तीनि हाथ एक अरधाई ।
ऐसा अंबर चीन्हौं रे भाई ।।
कहै कबीर जे अंबर जांनैं ।
ताहीं सूं मेरा मन मांनैं ।।

Tell me, brother,
who supports the sky?
Blessed is he who knows this.

The sky is full of stars,
pray, who painted
these wonderful stars ?

Not the sky you see,
but another,
inaccessible and invisible,

three and a half-hands,
discern such a sky,
my brother.

I honour him,
says Kabir,
who knows this sky.

u-14

हम न मरैं मरिहै संसारा ।
हमकूँ मिल्या जियावनहारा ।।
अब न मरौं मरनै मन मांनां ।
तेई मुए जिन रांम न जांनां ।।
साकत मरैं संतन जीवै ।
भरि भरि रांम रसाइन पीवै ।।
हरि मरिहैं तो हमहूं मरिहैं ।
हरि न मरै हम काहे कू मरिहैं ।।
कहै कबीर मन मनहिं मिलावा ।
अमर भये सुख सागर पाया ।।

The world will die,
not I,
I have found
the Truth of life.

Only they die
who know not Ram,
I know death,
how can I die?

The shaktas die,
the saints live on,
and they relish
the Rama-wine.

If Hari dies,
then I will die,
Hari never dies,
why should I?

My mind is now,
says Kabir,
at-one-ment
with the Cosmic-mind,

beyond the reach
of death am I,
forever I live,
in the Ocean of Bliss.

u-15

बहुरि हम काहे कू आवहिंगे ।
बिछुरे पंचतत की रचनां, तब हम रांमहि पांवहिगें ।।
पृथी का गुण पांणी सोष्या, पांनी तेज मिलांवहिगें ।
तेज पवन मिलि पवन सबद मिलि, सहज समाधि लगांवहिगें ।।
जैसैं बहु कंचन के भूषन, एकहि गालि तवांवहिगें ।
ऐसैं हम लोक वेद के बिछुरैं, सुंनिहि मांहि समांवहिगें ।।
जैसैं जलहि तरंग तरंगनी, ऐसैं हम दिखलांवहिगें ।
कहै कबीर स्वामी सुख सागर, हंसहि हंस मिलांवहिगें ।।

Why should we come again?
Free from the frame
of five-elements,
we shall find Ram.

Earth will mix in water,
water will merge in fire,
fire in air, air in the Word,
and we shall merge in the Void.

As in the crucible,
ornaments melt into gold,
free from the ways of the world,
we shall melt in the Void.

As waves appear in the waters,
souls will be in the Over-soul,
and we shall live forever,
in the Ocean of Bliss, says Kabir.

u-16

हरिजन हंस दसा लिये डोलै ।
निरमल नाम चवै जस बोलै ।।
मानसरोवर तट के वासी ।
रामचरन चित आँनि उदासी ।।
मुकताहल बिना चंचु न लावै ।
मौनि गहै कि हरिगुन गावै ।।
कउआ कुबुधि निकट नही आवै ।
सो हंसा निज दरसन पावै ।।
कहै कबीर सोई जन तेरा ।
खीर नीर का करे निबेरा ।।

A self-realised soul
lives like a swan,
always meditates
on the name of God.

Centered in the self,
he is cool and calm,
to all except
the lotus-feet of Ram.

He either keeps mum
or hums His glory,
picks up nothing,
but the pearl of name.

The crows of vice
never come close,
such a swan alone
realises the Truth.

God's own man,
he alone can sift
milk from water,
says Kabir.

u-17

प्यारे रांम मनहि मनां ।
कासूं कहूं कहन को नाहीं, दूसर और जनां ।।
ज्यूँ दरपन प्रतिब्यंब देखिये, आप दवासूं सोई ।
संसौ मिटयौ एक कौ एकै, महा प्रलै जब होई ।।
जौ रिझऊँ तौ महा कठिन है, बिन रिझयैं थैं सब खोटी ।
कहै कबीर तरक दोइ साधैं, ताकी मति है मोटी ।।

I keep dear Ram to myself,
whom should I tell?
There is none other.

As an image in the mirror
is just a reflection,
the Great Deluge occurs
then One alone remains.

The one is tough to please,
but all is false if I cease,
says Kabir, yet, dunce is he
who tries to prove the two.

u-18

हम तौ एक एक करि जांनां ।
दोइ कहै तिनहीं कौं दोजग, जिन नांहिन पहिचांनां ।।
एकै पवन एक ही पांनी, एक जोति संसारा ।
एक ही खाक घढ़े सब भांड़े, एक ही सिरजनहारा ।।
जैसैं बाढ़ी काष्ट ही काटै, अगिनि न काटै कोई ।
सब घटि अंतरि तूँ हीं व्यापक, धरै सरूपैं सोई ।।
माया मोहे अर्थ देखि करि, काहै कूं गरबांनां ।
निरभै भया कछू नहीं व्यापै, कहै कबीर दिवांनां ।।

The One is one, I know,
to hell they go,
who know Him not
and talk of two.

There's one air, one water,
and one light in the universe,
of one clay, one Creator
has made all the vessels.

Carpenter cuts the wood,
not the fire inherent,
He alone immanent in all,
takes form of the vessels.

Maya beguiled, why riches
puff you up with pride?
Nothing affects the fearless,
says carefree Kabir.

u-19

संतौ भाई आई ग्यॉन की आँधी रे ।
भ्रम की टाटी सबै उड़ॉणी, माया रहै न बाँधी ।।
हिति चित की द्वै थूँनी गिराँनी, मोह बलींडा टूटा ।
त्रिस्नां छाँनि परि धर ऊपरि, कुबुधि का भाँडा फूटा ।।
जोग जुगति करि संतौं बाँधी, तिरचू चुवै न पाँणीं ।
कूड़कपट काया का निकस्या, हरि की गति जब जाँणी ।।
आँधी पीछैं जो जल बूठा, प्रेम हरि जन भींनाँ ।
कहै कबीर भाँन के प्रगटे, उदित भया तम षीनाँ ।।

Look, saint-brothers,
the storm of knowledge
has come.

It blasted
the blinds of delusion,
bolts of Maya are gone.

Poles of duality turned over,
the rafter of attachment
fell on the ground.

The thatch of desires
upturned,
vessel of evils smashed.

Saints built it again
on the yoga-plan,
not a drop can now go in.

As the ways of Hari
dawned on me,
all the rubbish was out.

Drenched I was with love,
in the showers,
that came post the storm.

As the sun appeared,
Says Kabir.
darkness was at once gone.

u-20

रे मन बैठि कितै जिनि जासी ।
हिरदै सरोवर है अविनासी ।।
काया मधे कोटि तीरथ, काया मधे कासी ।
काया मधे कवलापति, काया मधे वैकुंठवासी ।
उलटी पवन षटचक्र निवासी, तीरथराज गंग तट वासी ।
गगनमंडल रविससि दोइ तारा, उलटि कूंची लागि किवारा ।
कहै कबीर भई उजियारा, पंच मारि एक रह्यौ निनारा ।

O Mind,
don't go anywhere,
God lives in the heart.

Millions of shrines
lie here, and
so is holy Kashi.

In the body lives
the Lord of heaven,
and the Lord of Luxmi.

Reversing the breath,
through the six,
you reach the sacred Ganges.

Sun and moon shine in the Void,
the door is locked,
but key hangs upside down.

As their light rolls out,
five foes die, and
One alone remains, says Kabir.

u-21

रे मन जाहि जहाँ तोहि भावै ।
अब न कोई तेरे अंकुस लावै ।।
जहाँ जहाँ जाइ तहाँ तहाँ रांमां ।
हरि पद चीन्हीं कियो विश्रांमां ।।
तन रंजिन तब देखियत दोई ।
प्रगटयौ ग्यांन जहां तहां सोई ।।
लीन निरंतर वपु बिसराया ।
कहै कबीर सुख सागर पाया ।।

O Mind, you are free,
follow your will,
no more restraint on you.

Go where you like to go,
Ram is everywhere,
so I rest at the feet of Hari.

Body-bound, I saw two,
knowledge revealed
One in all.

Lost in the One, says Kabir,
I lost the body-sense,
and found the Ocean of Bliss.

u-22

परम गुरू देखौ रिदै बिचारी, कछु करौ सहाइ हंमारी ।।
लावानालि तंति एक संगि करि, जंत्र एक भल साजा ।
सति असति कछु नहीं जांनूँ, जैसें बजावा तैसें बाजा ।।
चोर तुम्हारा तुम्हारी आग्या, मुसियत नगर तुम्हारा ।
इनके गुनह हमह का पकरौ, का अपराध हमारा ।।
सेई तुम्ह सेई हम एकै कहियत, जब आपा पर नहीं जांनां ।
ज्यूं जल मैं जल पैसि न निकसै, कहै कबीर मन मांनां ।।

O Lord Supreme,
just think over it,
and help me please.

Joining few strings,
and a bottle-gourd-hollow,
a nice device you have made!

Real-unreal, I know not,
I know it plays
as and when you wish.

The thief is yours,
yours is the house,
he robs it by your order.

For his trespass,
you prosecute me!
What is my offence?

I am what you are,
one we are,
for me you aren't the other.

As water from water
is inseparable, says Kabir,
so are we from each other.

u-23

अब हम सकल कुसल करि माँनाँ ।
स्वाँति भई तब गोव्यंद जाँनाँ ।।
तन में होती कोटि उपाधि । उलटि भई सुख सहज समाधि ।।
जम थैं उलटि भया है राम । दुख बिसरा सुख किया विश्राम ।।
बैरी उलटि भये हैं मीता । साषत उलटि भये हैं चीता ।।
आपा जानि उलटि लै आप । तो नहीं व्यापै तिन्यूँ ताप ।।
अब मन उलटि सनातन हूवा । तब हम जानाँ जीवत मूवा ।।
कह कबीर सुख सहज समाऊँ । आप न डरौ न और डराऊँ ।।

I have found Govinda,
all is well,
and peace prevails.

Millions of woes
afflicting the body,
have changed into ecstasy.

Death is dear as Ram,
gone is misery,
joys have now come in.

All foes are now friends,
even shaktas
have turned pleasant.

Realising the self,
I moved inwards,
triple-ills touch no more.

The mind is back
to its pristine-glory,
I am dead and alive both.

Merged in the Bliss, says Kabir.
I fear none,
and none fears me now.

u-24

अब का डरौ डर डरहिं समांनां ।
जब थैं मोर तोर पहिचांनां ।।
जब लग मोर तोर करि लीन्हां,
भै भै जनमि जनमि दुख दीन्हां ।।
आगम निगम एक करि जांनां,
ते मनवां मन मांहि समांनां ।।
जब लग ऊँच नीच करि जांनां,
ते पसुवा भूले भ्रंम नानां ।।
कहि कबीर मैं मेरी खोई,
तबहि रांम अवर नहीं कोई ।।

Now what to fear?
Fear merged in Fear,
I know the secret of duality.

Fears always afflicted me,
when I isolated
you from me.

One is he with the One
who sees
the inner-outer as one.

But brute is he
who led by delusion
makes low-high division.

Freed from my I,
says Kabir.
I saw Ram in all.

u-25

अकथ कहांणी प्रेम की, कछु कही न जाई ।
गूंगे केरी सरकरा, बैठे मुसकाई ।।
भोमि बिनां अरू बीज बिन, तरवर एक भाई ।
अनंत फल प्रकासिया, गुर दीया बताई ।
मन थिर बैसि बिचारिया, रांमहि ल्यौ लाई ।
झूठी अनभै बिस्तरी, सब थोथी बाई ।
कहै कबीर सकति कछुनांहीं, गुर भया सहाई ।
आंवण जांणी मिटि गई, मन मनहि समाई ।

Untellable is the tale of love,
all words it beguiles,
like the sweets of a dumb
who eats and smiles.

A tree grows up, brother,
without soil and seed,
fruit-infinite blooms there
when the Guru leads.

With an unwavering mind,
as I mused over Ram,
like husk blown by the wind
all the fake stuff was gone.

Guru's grace, no virtue of mine,
mind has merged, says Kabir,
in the Cosmic-mind,
and life-death are no more.

u-26

अब तोहि जान न देहूँ रांम पियारे ।
ज्यूँ भावै त्यूँ होई हमारे ।।
बहुत दिनन के बिछुरे हरि पाये,
भाग बड़े घरि बैठैं आये ।
चरननि लागि करौं बरियाई,
प्रेम प्रीति राखौ उरझाई ।।
इत मन मंदिर रहौ नित चोषैं,
कहै कबीर परहु मत धोखै ।।

My Rama dear,
now I won't let you go,
be mine as you wish.

What a blessing !
Though long-divided,
you came yourself.

Falling at your feet,
with my love,
I will coax and snare you.

Lest you be deceived,
stay in my heart,
the best for you, says Kabir.

u-27

जब थैं आतम-तत बिचारा ।
तब निरबैर भया सबहिन थैं, कांम क्रोध गहि डारा ।।
व्यापक ब्रह्म सबनि मैं एकै, को पंडित को जोगी ।
रांणा राव कवन सूं कहिये, कवन वैद को रोगी ।।
इन में आप आप सबहिन में, आप आपसूं खेलैं ।
नांनां भाँति घड़े सब भांडे, रूप धरे धरि मेलै ।।
सोचि बिचारि सबै जग देख्या, निरगुंण कोइ न बतावै ।
कहै कबीर गुणी अरू पंडित, मिली लीला जस गावै ।।

Ever since I realised myself,
free from ire and desire,
I am at peace with all.

All are imbued with God,
who is ascetic? Who is scholar?
Who is serf? Who is lord?
Who is patient? Who is doctor?

He is in them; they are in Him,
with Himself He plays,
all the vessels are His,
moulded in myriad ways.

Kabira wandered everywhere,
none could illuminate Him,
seers too praise His power,
but fail to tell who He is.

u-28

जस तूं तस तोहि कोई न जांन,
लोग कहैं सब आंनहि आंन ।
चारि वेद चहूँ मत का विचार,
इहि भ्रंमि भूलि परयौ संसार ।
सुरति सुमृति दोइ को बिसवास,
बाझि परयौ सब आसा पास ।।
ब्रह्मादिक सनकादिक सुर नर,
मैं बपुरौ धूँ कामें का कर ।
जिहि तुम तारौ सोइपैं तिरई,
कहै कबीर नांतर बांध्यौ मरई ।।

Nobody knows you
as you are,
they say things
of varying hues.

Four Vedas guide,
to diverse views,
resolving them,
all are beguiled;

Sruti and Smriti,
inspire such a faith,
as binds you further
to stupid rites.

Misled are folks
like Sanaka and Brahma,
what about me,
a poor, weak soul?

He whom you guide,
transcends Kabir,
else all are tied
to the life-death wheel.

u-29

अवधू, भूले को घर लावै, सो जन हमको भावै ।
घर में जोग भोग घर ही में, घर तज बन नहिं जावै ।
घर में जुक्त मुक्त घर ही में, जो गुरु अलख लखावै ।
सहज सुन्न में रहैं समाना, सहज समाधि लगावै ।
उन्मुनि रहै ब्रह्म को चीन्है, परम तत्व को पावै ।
सुरत-निरत को मेला करके, अनहद नाद बजावै ।
घर में बसत बस्तु भी घर है, घर ही बस्तु मिलावै ।
कहै कबीरा सुनो हो साधु, ज्यों का त्यों ठहरावै ।

Avadhoo, he is dear to me
who brings
the beguiled-soul home;

who leaves not home
for the forest, for
passion-dispassion lie at home;

if Guru reveals the Invisible
he finds redemption
staying at home.

who knowing Brahma
is one with Him,
and finds the Truth Supreme;

who is ever immersed
in the Void, and
enters ecstasy with ease;

who merging love
in renunciation,
plays the Drum-divine.

Truth lies at home,
home is Truth,
and it is found via home.

O saint-brothers, says Kabir,
stay at home,
it will come to you at home.

u-30

हंसा करो पुरातन बात ।
कौन देस से आया हंसा, उतरना कौन घाट ।
कहाँ हंसा बिसराम किया है, कहाँ लगाये आस ।।
अब ही हंसा चेत सबेरा, चलो हमारे साथ ।
संसय-सोक वहाँ नहीं व्यापै, नहीं काल के त्रास ।।
हिआँ मदन-बन फूल रहें हैं, आवै सोहं बास ।
मन भौंरा जिहँ उलझ रहें हैं, सुख की ना अभिलास ।।

O swan, let us recall
the primordial days;

where your roots lie,
O swan, and
where are you going?

What have you achieved,
O swan, and
what you still long for?

Now is the dawn, wake up,
O swan, and
come with us to a country,

where doubt and misery
never prey on, and
death arouses no awe;

where pristine-flowers
always blossom, and
air hums the music-divine;

where heart-bee sips
from within, and
transcends all desires.

u-31

मुरली बजत अखंड सदा से, तहाँ प्रेम झनकारा है ।
प्रेम-हद्द तजी जब भाई, सत्त लोक की हद्द पुनि आई ।।
उठत सुगंध महा अधिकाई, जाको वार न पारा है ।
कोटि भान राग को रूपा, बीन सत-धुन बजै अनूपा ।।

From time immemorial,
the flute has been playing,
and its resonance
is love.

Love flows into Truth,
when it moves
beyond its pales,
O brother.

Limitless, unconfined
is the fragrance
it exhales,
then, brother.

Its luster matches
that of a million suns,
but matchless is the tune
of truth playing on the flute.

u-32

कौन मुरली-शब्द सुन आनंद भयो
जोत बरे बिन बाती ।
बिना मूल के कमल प्रगट भयो
फुलवा फुलत भाँति भाँति ।
जैसे चकोर चंद्रमा चितवै
जैसे चातुक स्वाँति ।
तैसे संत सुरत के होके
हो गये जनम सँघाती ।

What a music of the flute!
It fills me with bliss.

No wick yet
a lamp lights up,
no roots yet
a lotus blossoms,
and myriad flowers
nod their heads.

As moon-bird
cries for the moon,
and rain-bird
pines for the rain-drop,
so longing for God,
I live forever with saints.

u-33

तरवर एक मूल बिन ठाढ़ा, बिन फूले फल लागे ।
साखा-पत्र कछु नहिं ताके, सकल कमल-दल गाजे ।
चढ़ तरुवर दो पंछी बोले, एक गुरु एक चेला ।
चेला रहा सो रस चुन खाया, गुरु निरंतर खेला ।
पंछी के खोज अगम परगट, कहैं कबीर बड़ी भारी ।
सब ही मूरत बीज अमूरत, मूरत की बलिहारी ।

A tree rises without roots,
no flowers yet it fruits,
it's lotus-petals all over,
no leaves or twigs has it.

Two birds sit on it,
a Guru and a disciple,
disciple pecks at fruits,
Guru loves to see him play.

Tough to seek the bird,
evident yet beyond reach,
Kabir glorifies the forms,
they express the formless in each.

u-34

तिंविर साँझ का गहिरा आवै,
छावै प्रेम तन-मन में ।
पच्छिम दिस की खिड़की खोलो,
डूबहु प्रेम-गगन में ।
चेत-कँवल-दल रस पीयो रे,
लहर लेहु या तन में ।
संख घंट सहनाई बाजै,
शोभा-सिंध महल में ।
कहै कबीर सुनो भाई साधो,
अमर-साहब लख घट में ।

The shadow of the evening
grows darker, and
love overpowers body-mind;

throw open the window
to the west, and
dive deep in the Void of love.

Sip the nectar,
from the lotus of awareness
and let waves embrace you.

In the glorious Void-palace,
listen to the music
of conch, bells and lute.

Listen, O saint-brothers,
I found my Lord-Eternal
within myself, says Kabir.

u-35

कोई प्रेम की पेंग झुलावै रे ।
भुज के खंभ और प्रेम के रस से,
तन-मन आजु झुलाव रे ।
नैनन बादर झर लाओ,
श्याम घटा उर छाव रे ।
आवत आवत श्रुत की राह पर,
फिकर पिया को सुनाव रे ।
कहत कबीर सुनो भाई साधो,
पिया को ध्यान चित लाव रे ।

May someone
put up a swing of love!

On the poles of arms today,
with the rope of love,
let the body-mind sway.

Let dark-dense-clouds
overspread the heart, and
let the eyes brim over with love.

Then, by slow degrees,
going near your Love,
pour your fears in His ears.

Listen, O saint-brothers,
says Kabir,
be aflame with love for the Lord.

u-36

दरियाव की लहर दरियाव है जी
दरियाव और लहर में भिन्न कोयम् ।
उठे तो नीर है बैठे तो नीर है
कहो जो दूसरा किस तरह होयम् ।
उसी का फेर के नाम लहर धरा
लहर के कहे क्या नीर खोयम् ।
जक्त ही फेर जब जक्त परब्रह्म में
ज्ञान कर देख माल गोयम् ।।

Wave of the river is just river,
do river and wave differ?

Rising and falling, it is water,
can wave be other than water?

If a wave is called water,
is there a loss of water?

The inner-eye sees the worlds,
told in God as beads of rosary.

u-37

चलत मनसा अचल कीन्ही, मन हुआ रंगी ।
तत्व में निहतत्व दरसा, संग में संगी ।।
बंध ते निर्बंध कीन्हा, तोड़ सब तंगी ।
कहै कबीर अगम गम कीया, प्रेम रंग रंगी ।।

The restless mind
is put at rest, and
the heart is illumined.

In the forms I beheld
the formless,
along with the Friend.

Breaking the shackles,
You set me free
from all the bondage.

Now Inaccessible
is accessible,
and soaked in love is Kabir.

u-38

अब मैं पाइबो रे पाइबो ब्रह्म गियान ।
सहज समाध सुख मैं रहिबौं, कोटि कलप विश्राम ।।
गुरु कृपाल कृपा जब कीन्हीं, हिरदै कंवल बिगासा ।
भागा भ्रम दसौं दिस सूझ्या, परम जोति प्रकासा ।।
मृतक उठ्या धनक कर लीयै, काल अहेड़ी भागा ।
उदया सूर निस किया पयांनां, सोवत थैं अब जागा ।।
अविगत अकल अनूपम देख्या, कहतां कह्या न जाई ।
सैंन करै मनही मन रहसैं, गूँगैं जांनि मिठाई ।।
पुहुप बिना एक तरवर फंलिया, बिन कर तूर बजाया ।
नारी बिना नीर घट भरिया, सहज रूप सो पाया ।।
देखत काँच भया तन कँचन, बिन बानी मन मांनां ।
उड्या विहंगम खोज न पाया, ज्यूँ जल जलहिं समांनां ।।
पूज्या देव बहुरि नहीं पूजौं, न्हाये उदिक नांउं ।
भागा भ्रम ये कहौ कहताँ, आये बहुरि न आंउं ।।
आपै मैं तब आपा निरष्या, अपन पै आपा सूझ्या ।
आपै कहत सुनन पुनि अपनां, अपन पै आपा बूझ्या ।।
अपनैं परचै लागी तारी, अपन पै आप समांनां ।
कहै कबीर जे आप विचारै, मिटि गया आवन जांनां ।।

Now I know the Truth-supreme,
centered in my own self,
I will rest there forever.

All the doubts disappeared,
lotus of the heart flowered,
everything stood revealed
as Guru's grace showered.

Night left as the sun arose,
with an invigorating zeal,
the dead self awoke
and death took to heels.

I saw the Absolute, Existent,
all words it beguiles,
like the sweets of a dumb
who eats and smiles.

As I realised myself,
a tree blossomed sans flowers
a trumpet blew by itself,
by itself a pot filled with water.

The glass-body was gold anon,
nothing was said yet I knew;
the bird soared beyond ken,
like water in water, was lost in the sky.

I worship no god but you,
will bathe in no other water,
as free from illusions am I,
I will visit the world no more.

Within my self, I saw the Self,
self is the knower and the known,
the speaker and the listener is self,
I met the self through the self alone.

Knowing the self, I fell in a trance,
the self too merged in the Self,
life and death he transcends,
who knows the self, says Kabir.

u-39

अमृत बरिसै हीरा निपजै,
घंट पड़ै टकसाल ।
कबीर जुलाहा भया पारषू
अनभै उतरया पार ।।
कबीर हरि रस यों पिया,
बाकी रही न थाकि ।
पाका कलस कुम्हार का,
बहुरि न चड़ई चाकि ।।

The nectar showers,
the diamond flowers;
the bell announces this.

Kabir, the weaver
becomes a connoisseur,
and leaps the gulf to freedom.

Besotted is Kabir
by the wine of name,
thirst is slaked forever.

The pot that's baked,
is not put on
the potter's wheel again.

NOTES

SALOA

Notes

About Kabir

1. Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, *Kabir*, p. 21.
2. Dr. P. Machway, Kabir, p. 43.
3. Dr. Ramkumar Verma, *Kabir: Eik Aanusheelan*, p. 9.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
5. Moti Singh, in *Kabir,* ed. Vijayendra Snatak, p. 138.
6. Dr. Grierson, quoted in Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, *Kabir,* p. 139.
7. P.S. Chaturvedi, *Kabir Sahitya ki Parakh*, p. 52.

About the Poems

1. Sant Kripal Singh Ji, The Crown of Life, p. 195.
2. Ajay Tiwari, in *Kabir ka Mahattva*, ed. Harish Chadra Aggarwal, p. 84.
3. Matthew Arnold, Dover Beech, in *Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense*, p. 833.
4. Sri Sri Mata Amritanandamayi, Amma's Millenium Message, 2002.
5. William Shakespeare, Let me not to the marriage of true minds, in *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, p. 880.

Awakening

a-1 Word is the Sound. It pervades the self as well as the universe. When Guru initiates the disciple, he shoots the arrow of the Word through the sleeping-soul.

a-2 Man, according to Raja-Yoga is 'a layered-entity', and is clothed in many folds, one within the other. To unveil our divine essence by rejecting our identification with our body, mind, and intellect and to invoice the pure Awareness that shines in our depths is the highest peak of prayer. ...As heart and mind grow purer, the thoughts arrive at so fine an equipoise and integration that the veils of inner darkness are burnt to cinders and the inner glory stands revealed. (from 'The Crown of Life')

a-3 'Selling yourself' implies the soul's involvement in the world.

a-4 Kabir berates knowledge sans love, it is lame and takes one nowhere.

a-5 Man, the representative of Nature is lily, and water is Brahma-tattva. Man lives in God and finally merges in God; he is made of the stuff called God.

a-6 'It' is used for the human-body with which we are so totally identified that we think of it as our home, trying to possess it we declare it Hindu or Muslim... Kabir looks upon life in the world as night while death ushers in the dawn of a new day.

a-7 The Hindi version of the poem has the word 'khasam' which means 'like sky', beyond and above everything, i.e., the Void. It suggests that the string of life is in the hands of the Power beyond everything. In Arabic language, 'khasam' means a useless husband, one who cannot master. Kabir may have used it for the mind, a slave of the senses.

a-8 The 'summons are served' by death. Body is the fort besieged by death, 'breath,' the ruler is arrested within. In the olden days wealth was buried underground for safety sake. The different parts of the body are the actors; the drumbeat is the heartbeat.

a-10 One has to become the holy book, and revere it as a light on the way, as a guide-post. God in the picture is all right but the picture as God is wrong.

a-11 Real prayer is listening to God, to the still, small voice within.

a-12 Kabir neither accepts God as conditioned reality (*saguna*) like the incarnation of Lord as Ram, the son of King Dasaratha, nor as an unconditioned (*nirguna*) the prohibiting one, 'not this, not this'. Kabir's God is beyond the three constituents, i.e., *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. As the waves appear and disappear, the manifest things and beings are either patent or latent in the Lord.

a-14 The soul floats like a song in the cosmos as well as in the universe. Saints and yogis hear this song in the inhalation and exhalation of each breath. Each ingoing breath is 'hum' and outgoing 'sa'. There is a mystery in the song. Along with 'hum-sa' (I am That) yogi also hears 'sa-hum' (That is me). It implies what He is the same I am. (from 'Kabir Bani) As Brahma is the cause of the whole universe, there is one essence in all.

a-16 Ravana, the mythological king with ten heads, was the ruler of Lanka. His fort was supposed to be made of gold.

a-18 The poem highlights the transient nature of life. Word given by Satguru enables one to reach home, i.e. God.

a-20 White crows are grey hair, indicating the advent of old age.

a-24 Jeevatma is the wayfarer in the wild woods of the world; guru or *sattva* shows the way out, intellect, or *rajas* binds while the tamas tries to destroy. Kabir exhorts such people who do not follow the path shown by Guru but when troubles overpower them, they grumble. 'The wilderness' is the world and the guide is Guru The blind well' stands for fanaticism in religion. 'Five friends' are five senses; they turn the soul towards the world.

a-25 Heaven as a place is a myth. Actually he who talks does not know and he who knows does not talk.

a-26 Bliss is innate; it comes of its own accord. However, it reveals itself in the light of self-knowledge.

a-32 God is the husband of the individual-soul. The ornaments etc. stand for rites and rituals. These are of no use if the heart is barren of love for the Lord.

a-33 Preserving the seed means observing celibacy. Nothing avails except total surrender to God. By dropping the ego, all the barriers break down and one is connected to Ram.

a-35 Three worlds are earth, heaven, and hell. Banavari is one of the names of Lord Krishna. Kabir uses this title to convey that if the forest-master is pleased, others are automatically pleased. The 'root' is used for God and 'branches' for gods.

a-36 Fire and water are passions and devotion. Religion is realisation of the self.

a-41 Knowledge devoid of devotion is useless. The core of religion is the perception of inherent oneness of the whole universe hence love for all.

a-42 The poem propounds the theory of karma. Kabir calls Ram the King Ram but his Ram is not the son of King Dashratha of Ayodhya. The ways of Lord Ram are beyond comprehension because

He is God (Narayana) while King Ram is an ideal man (Narottama) his justice is impartial hence understandable while that of an ordinary man (Nara) is that of a gap between speech and actions.

a-44 Jogi is used for a man keen to be rewarded by salvation. Looking like a goat is symbolic of his animal nature. Revolutionary as Kabir is, he says that let the sex energy move from the third center to the fourth, from the fourth to the fifth and onwards and let it be transformed into spiritual energy. (taken from Osho)

Yearning

y-1 The poet's informal addresses shows his intimacy with God.

y-2 The mother-child relationship suggests dualism but motherhood points to non-dualism. When love is such that the mother suffers for the child, where is the difference between the two? The blunders can be read as instincts, which trap one in the wheel of life and death. (Parashuram Chaturvedi)

y-4 The inter-connection of all things points to the totality of life. As senses are mutually aware of each other so the Lord and His devotee are; as the pains of body, known to life, end when life merges in death so the sorrow of the devotee will end when he merges in God. As water relieves the agony of thirst so God only can allay His devotee has agitated feelings.

y-6 'The palanquin' is human life. It is like a flimsy cot for it is vulnerable. The five carriers are five senses, too willful to obey the soul.

y-10 It is ironical that in spite of being in God, the individual-soul fails to see Him. The fire is that of sensual-pleasures; when the water of Maya ignorance (avidya-Maya) becomes knowledge, it quenches the fire of desires.

y-12 The grief of devotee longing for Ram is intense as well as incurable. .

y-14 Guru's Word pierces the self and like a storm carries away the body consciousness.

y-15 'Such a rare blessing' is human-life. Man alone has the possibility of rising to divinity. Labour without wages was the order of Kabir's time.

y-18 The soul in exile pleads for its return home. The 'alliance of five' is that of desire, anger, pride, greed, and attachment. The Ganges refers to *Ida* while the *Jamuna* to *pingla*. The harvest refers to *sadhana*. The seven saplings are seven preambles of knowledge, Kabir calls them 'seven *suratis*' also.

y-19 The poem can be read on social and spiritual levels; '*gusain*' is the Lord of the cows and the Lord of the senses as well. 'Five farmers' are five sense-organs, 'field' refers to body, 'the landlord' to mind and 'the officer' to intellect; mind and intellect together join the ropes of desires and attachment with which they whip the soul to identify itself with the body only. 'The crooked chief 'is time. Dharmaraja is the Lord of Death. The poem hints at despotism of the day.

y-21 'Playing with friends' implies sitting in satsang, singing songs of God's glory. Fear grips a seeker when he comes closer to the heart and the hold of the head grows weaker. Kabir says one has to drop the ego. For him religion is not a ritual, it is a love-affair. One should be in love with the whole universe, when that happens then love burns lamps in eyes and one can see Him in all.

Union

u-2 The 'herb' is the *mantra*, Guru gives to the disciple at the time of initiation. Five cobras are five sense organs while twenty-five female cobras

are psychophysical disorders caused by five elements.

u-4 The 'thief is Maya, trying to sneak into the 'house', i.e. the self of the individual. The golden-cell is the *anandamaya kosh* or the causal body from which everything else below the subtle body springs. The precious thing is *kundalini* lying dormant. Kabir's early poems show marked influence of yoga.

u-6 The earthen-house refers to the human body. The thundering clouds point to the fear of death. In yoga, the tenth door also known as *Brahmrandhra* or the third-eye is an imaginary opening at the top of the skull through which the soul is said to escape to union with the Absolute. Four guards are *citta, mana, buddhi* and *ahaankar,* all four together are also known as *antahkaran*. In spite of their watch, death robs the house.

u-7 Brahma, the creator is also a *Jeevatma,* having a cosmic function to fulfil. He too is wending his way to *mukti*. The poem is an attack on scholars engaged in wrangles over petty things.

u-8 The poem suggests a subtle movement from *bhakti* to mysticism, a devotee desires his deity to be adored by all, but a beloved wants to have monopoly over her lover. It also seems to advocate love as the only basis of marriage, and exhorts people seeking God outside. The last part clarifies how very few people recognize the individual-soul and the Supreme-soul as the same. The neighbour stands for Maya, son for the fruit of cumulative actions.

u-10 Kabir as an individual-soul addresses the liberated-souls to sing the welcome song. When the individual-soul is no more body-bound, five elements, distanced from the body, join their source, i.e. God. 'Making an altar of body-pond' implies drying up the surging waters of passions with the heat of devotion. The number of gods

refers to the whole humanity (around thirty-three crores in Kabir's time). According to Kabir, all the human beings are micro-gods.

u-11 By playing on the word 'hue', Kabir conveys the inherent oneness of the universe.

u-13 By 'sky' Kabir means the Void, which can be reached with the help of the *kundalini* power lying dormant at the Cocyggle center in three and a half coils. When it awakens, it shoots up with a force to the *brahmarandhra'* or the Void where it unites the sun and the moon, causing the flow of the nectar.

u-15 The process of trance is just like the process of death or final dissolution in God; as the earth element rises up from the basal plexus to the hypogastric center and gets dissolved in the water there, hands and feet become lifeless. When the water element rises up to the solar plexus, the fire transforms into vapour, paralysing the generative organs, next the fire element itself gets lost in the air element at the heart-plexus rendering the region below the heart go cold, then the air element gets etherialized at the *kantha chakra*, and renders the heart and pulse motionless.

u-16 God is mingled with *Maya,* the ordinary people cannot distinguish Him from Maya, but the *paramahansa* can see God to the exclusion of *Maya.*

u-17 For a self-realised soul all are the manifestations of that One so everybody is his own self. The Great Deluge is a mythological annihilation of the universe at the end of an aeon, then One indestructible, i.e. God alone remains.

u-19 Knowledge gives an inner-eye, powerful enough to pierce the thick layers of confusions. It allows a glimpse of the true religion. The rain of devotion that follows, washes away the stains of attachment, desires and selfishness. Thus with the dawn of wisdom, the lotus of heart blooms.

u-26 In proportion to the individual-soul's increasing awareness of its divinity, its fear and formality decrease. The last line shows the boldness of love.

u-33 God or Existence is the tree without roots because He is the ultimate cause, the whole which has to be rooted in itself. He is not a seed. He is always the same. The existence is mysterious, it is through and through lotus, no roots, no leaves. It is the final flowering. The Master is our innermost core, the witness; and the disciple is the world in us. The disciple goes on relishing different games. It is tough to seek as the bliss-seeking bird is merely a refection of the bliss-emanating original bird.

Glossary

abhāvam

It means non-existence: the bodies were not there, will not be there, so their existence amounts to non-existence.

anāhata

is unstruck, eternal music; surati is its key-note and nirati is its tune.

ātmā

is formless, boundless and changeless, it is synoynmous with God. The seat of the soul is between and behind the eyebrows.

aum

is a principle which transcends the three planes of existence, the physical the astral and the causal, and is the source of inner illumination. Its three letters suggest the three phases of the human experience: 'A' the waking state. 'U' the dream-state and 'M' the deep-sleep-state. The Ultimate Reality includes all the three phases of human experience yet goes beyond them. The silence that

follows each recitation of the word Aum suggests the state of Turiya or the Absolute Being which is the source end of everything.

bhajana

is meditation that leads to inner hearing.

Brahma

The first of the Trinity, is supposed to be the creator of the universe. His name is derived from the root word 'Brimh' means 'to expand' implying the vast seed or womb (the Prakriti).

branma vidyā

The knowledge of the substrarum is known as ***Brahma-vidyā***.

cakras

Like the plexuses of the physical body there are centers of vital forces in the subtle tubes which are called *cakras*. They are six in number.

ājñā-cakra (Cavernous-plexus)

with a two petaled lotus, the centre of command, is the region of the third eye behind the two eye-brows.

visuddhi cakra (Pharyngeal plexus)

with a sixteen-petaled lotus, is the center of great purity, it is the region between the third eye and the heart, it is the center of the *vigyan-mai kosh*.

anahata cakra (Cardiac plexus)

with a twelve-petaled lotus, is the region of the heart where the *prana* or the

vital airs reign supreme, it is a lotus of the unstruck sound, it is the center of the *mano-mai-kosh*.

Maṇipura cakra (Solar plexus)

with an eight-petaled-lotus, is part of the heart region which extends down to the navel, it is the center of the *prana-mai-kosh*.

svādhiṣṭhāna cakra (Hypogastric plexus)

with a six-petaled-lotus, is the region of the navel extending down to anus, it is the center of the *anna-mai-kosh*.

mūlādhāra cakra (Basal plexus)

is the root wherein are rooted all the subtle tubes. The key to open these locks is deep meditation.

gagan

is the spiritual realm above the tenth door or brahmrandhra.

ghāta

is between the two eye-brows.

ghata

Kabir uses for the body.

Imgalā-Pingalā

Ida or *Imgalā* is the luner canal, has abundance of the moisture of the moon while *Pingala* is the solar canal, and has energy of the sun. Starting from the *Svadhishthan* center, they run spirally round the central or fire canal, *sushumna*, and end in the left and right nostral respectively.

karma

Samchit karmas remain stored up to bear fruit in distant future, *krtamana* in the near future while *prarbadha* is working out in the body.

kundalini

is the coiled serpentine energy lying in a dormant state at the spinal root center.

Maya

latent yet manifest like fire in cotton. Kabir calls it the primitive power of God, but lays stress on its clouding power.

nirguna brahma

The Attributeless Absolute Reality.

nirguna sant tradition

Its important elements are the oneness of the human body and the universe, breath control, nadi control, gestures, six centers, brahmrandhra, the awakening of Kundalni power, surati-nirati and sahaja.

nirati

means a changeless, ultimate state. It is equated with the Void and surari to a bird flying in it.

non-dualism

Reality or God is one, though indefinable in His absolute form, when immanent in the universe. He is known as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, with inherent power to manifest itself as Jagata and Jeeva. This inherent power

goes by the name of Maya.

parama dhāma

The substratum of everything manifest and unmanifest, the Supreme Abode.

sabda rūpa brahmā

The vibration of the sound transforms one dot into many and becomes the cause of the universe. When the sound fades and dies, the whole universe also shrinks into the point.

sahaja

is the essence of each creaturer. It is love. It is also that stage in devotion when the devotee gives up every thing easily. Our instincts are pure but we go against them and wander. Returning to our true nature and perception of the same soul in the whole universe in *sahajbhava*. When one attains it, the mind is purified, and the aspirant forgets everything about himself that is *sahajavastha*. *Sahaj yoga* is chanting of Ram's name. Its most important aspect is complete surrender to God. Kabir also uses it in its original meaning as natural.

samsāra

is the ever-changing, phenomenal world. Brahman with its unmanifested energy, Maya is the source of the Tree of Samsara as such it is said to have its root above. Mahat, Ahankara, Tantriks,

etc. are its branches evolving to grosser and grosser states—hence it is said to be branching 'below'.

sādhō

is an aspirant who taking the support of knowledge, yoga and devotion comes to know this world as false.

satanāma

is the power of the Absolute. When it assumes the form of the Guru (Word made flesh) it works through him by means of satasang, both outer and inner.

samādhi

is the process whereby the individual is deindividualised and sees within himself the totality unbounded and unembodied, limitless and free, all-pervading like the ether.

sanyāsa

means total sublimation. Sanyas is not a matter of outer evasion but of inner freedom nyas means sublimation.

self

The self that is immanent in Nature, that which transcends Nature and that which is Absolute all these are the same Cosmic-Personality, viewed from different angles.

sound

The sound that acquaints us with things is called Word. All that moves or viberates is Word.

surati

God is always there, we have just lost his memory. It is our own power, an inner flow of the thought-waves.

sruti

the scriptures revealed through inner hearing.

trivēnī

where three nerves ida, pingla, and sushumna meet between the two brows.

unmuni

analysing the word if 'una' is taken as God, then unamani implies the absorption of mind in God.

Void

The supreme truth cannot be described in human language, it is beyond mind and speech, so Nagarjuna calls it the Void. The same is called *sahaja* by tantriks. For Kabir, it is also an object of love. He talks of the Void as the origin, the source, reaching there one is free from the cycle of life and death. He also refers to it as the middle stage between the spoken and the unspoken, between voice and silence.

Word

It is the vibration available to the ear as 'sound', to the skin as 'touch', to the eye as 'sight', to the tongue as 'taste', and to the nose as 'smell', thought is the vibration of the mind. According to

Kabir, the all-pervading vibration is the essence-word: in the scriputures it is called *Śabda* or *Nāda Brahma*. The entire creation is the manifestation of the word Aum or Cosmic-will.

yogi

boring the ears he wears rings and is called *'kaanphata-yogi'*, he carries kingari, a stringed instrument of medium size having a box-like wooden frame, *mēkhalā*, a waist-band of jute rope, etc.

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24/04/11

"Like a pearl in the heart of a shell, he was born of agony and abrasion, but the luster of the pearl was matchless. It glowed then and is still glowing in all its glory."

"A messenger of light, Kabir carried the light of love, knowledge and freedom to the suffering humanity."

"Kabir saw how the social conventions had hardened into blind beliefs. He also noticed how people indulged in greed, hypocrisy, and selfishness under the cover of religion. He refused to keep quiet. In an age when freedom of speech was unknown, he dared speak freely. He hit at the outer rituals ruthlessly. He defied all that tended to hide the truth and divide people. With this end in view, Kabir addressed his poems to the people trapped in ignorance."

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